



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



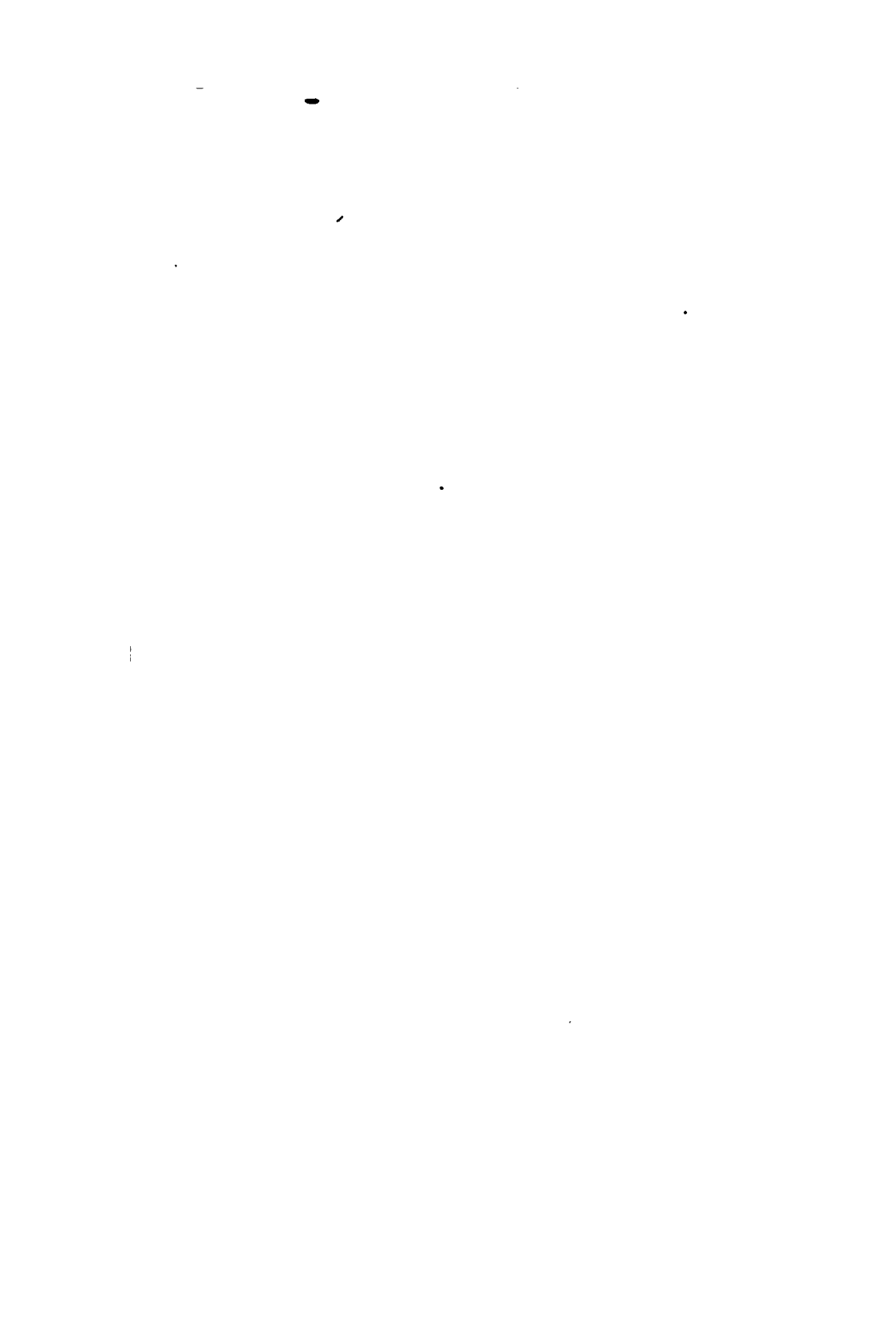


600051137N

41.

496.





1

—

.

|

,

|

.

|

1

**T H E M I R Z A .**



**V O L . I .**



1

# THE MIRZA.

BY

JAMES MORIER, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "HAJJI BABA," "ZOHRAH," "AYESHA," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1841.

496.

live, must practice deceit, where the meaning of the word honour is not to be defined, and where there is no government but such as emanates from caprice or despotism, there his astonishment and disgust are complete, although, at the same time, should he have any turn for humour, he cannot help being amused at the ingenuity of the wiles exercised, at the light-hearted levity, and apparent clown and pantaloon philosophy with which evils, such as the Englishman would call great, are supported.

During my stay in that country, which took place during the reign of the late King, Fattah Ali Shah, I became acquainted with many Persians of various ranks and denominations, from the King on the throne, to the lowest tent-pitcher and muleteer. At first, I felt as any other of my countrymen would feel; I was startled by their unceasing adulation, and petrified by their unblushing falsehoods, however pleased I might be with their winning manners; but as I became more acquainted with the genius and character of the nation, I learnt to place a more proper value upon

their professions, and to give a truer interpretation to their assertions, for I found much of the disgust which I had at first felt, proceeded from their forms of speech, which I can compare to nothing better than to a redundant paper currency, which begins by being of doubtful value, and ends by being worth nothing at all. How would it surprise Mr. A if riding with Mr. B. in the park, Mr. A. praising the beauty of his companion's horse, Mr. B. were immediately to say—"You do me honour—it is a present to you—it belongs to you forthwith—I will send it to you." And if, in utter confusion, Mr. A. felt himself bound to accept it, how much more surprized would he be to hear Mr. B. turn round and make the same present and the same speech to the next person who should happen equally to praise his horse! So it is in Persia. This sort of intercourse takes place on every common occurrence, and it would be deemed ill breeding, and a want of knowledge of life, if the language of falsehood, flattery and hyperbole, were not used the more abundantly, the more in consonance with the character of the people.

The Persians have aptly been called the Frenchmen of the East; vanity is, in truth, their besetting sin, and that circumstance alone may, perhaps, account for the lust for compliment and adulation which exists in both nations.

Among those who formed part of the Shah's court, I became intimately acquainted with a Mirza, one eminently ingenious, who, had he possessed the advantage of an enlightened education, in addition to his natural acquirements, would not have failed to distinguish himself in the world. He was in person, tall and ungainly, with no regularity of features, and possessing, what in a Persian's estimation is absolute deformity—a scanty beard. But he had a thoughtful cast of countenance, a large and full eye, with much sweetness of expression. His good sense becoming an antidote to the poison of an Asiatic education, made him see and deplore the great defects of his countrymen, and he frequently entered into very confidential confessions, respecting the acts and proceedings of some of the higher powers of the state. I make no doubt, had he lived

in England, he would have become an excellent reformer, so quick was he in discovering an abuse. I strongly believe he was but a sceptical Mahomedan; but whatever might be the case in that respect, he freely owned that there could be no hope for his nation, but in a total and subverting change. Notwithstanding this, he was in the enjoyment, if not of a very lucrative, at least, of a very exclusive situation at the court of the Shah, for he was the Poet Royal, with the title of Melek al Shohera, or Prince of Poets, a distinction acquired principally by his exquisite talent of lauding the King. His facility in the act of versification was great, and the fertility of his invention unbounded. One of his most successful feats in applying the powers of his flattery, was the composition of an historical poem, descriptive of the reign of his Royal patron, which he called the History of the King of Kings, we must suppose as a tacit triumph over the celebrated Shah Nameh, or the History of Kings, by Ferdûsi.

In proportion as our intimacy increased, I discovered how great were his powers of in-

vention, which in addition to the composition of poetry, I found to consist in the faculty of relating extemporaneous stories.

He informed me, that during the journeys which the Shah made on horseback, either on military or hunting expeditions, he was frequently called upon, in order to beguile the tedium of the road, to entertain him with stories, which he invented and related on the spot, adapting their nature and tendency to the exigency of the moment. I was much struck with this circumstance, as being highly characteristic of oriental life, and of the power of an Eastern King, who orders a story to be related as he would order a palace to be built; it also threw a light upon what might possibly be the originating cause of that succession of stories so much prized even in Europe, namely, the Arabian Night's Entertainments, and, consequently, I became extremely desirous to hear stories so fabricated. I did not hesitate to make my wishes known to my friend, who with that amiability of character for which he was conspicuous, assured me that he would be happy to indulge my curiosity at the very

first opportunity. Indeed, forgetting for a moment all that we had been agreed upon as to the vice of hyperbole, and the deceitfulness of words, he said—"May your shadow never be less!—You do me honour!—I am your slave! Let me be less than the least before you. Whatever little wit exists in your slave's understanding, it shall be exercised at your bidding! Bismillah, in the name of Allah, come—my house is your house, and my wit is your wit."

I was not slow in taking advantage of his invitation. It was agreed that I should first visit him at his own house, and that then we should meet as opportunities might offer. It was necessary that times and places should be studied, for as he was supposed to be always ready at the command of his Majesty, with his wit in full vigour, so he was obliged to apologise that he could not make a positive engagement, without inserting a clause to that effect. Indeed, as we continued to discuss this scheme, he appeared much charmed at the prospects of pleasure and advantage which it was likely to afford to him



personally. He said, that he had long felt the want of a rehearsal to a story; that such an exercise before he went to the Shah would be of the greatest advantage to him; that thus he might acquire a stock of stories, which he could draw upon at will, and being fore-armed, would never be at a loss—"For, alas!" added he, "wit is treacherous; my brain is sometimes as dry as an exhausted water melon, and nothing is left therein but some miserable seeds, which will never sprout, water them as I may."

Then, in his discourse, he would for ever intermingle effusions of poetry and poetic allusions, making large quotations, and this he frequently did from his own works, prefacing such quotations, by saying—"See how well I expressed myself! *bah bah bah!* how beautifully I have written!"

I determined to avail myself of these opportunities, in order to obtain a more perfect insight into the manners and modes of thinking of the people among whom I was living, endeavouring to preserve the spirit, if not the letter, of such stories as I might hear from the

lips of my friend. To render them agreeable to European readers, I felt would require much emendation, for Easterns are prolix, and my friend the Mirza was not the reverse. I found, that in common conversation, ideas flowed so quick in succession, that he had no sooner given birth to one, than another arose, of which he could not refrain giving me the full benefit. Therefore shunning the rock he was apt to split upon, I determined to adopt him as my beacon, and steer my way as clear from the shoals of prolixity as possible.

## VISIT I.

It having been determined that my first visit should take place on a Wednesday, that being, according to Persian superstition, a fortunate day, a *rúzi sefid*, or a white day; accordingly, accompanied by my pipe-bearer, who carried my kalian, I proceeded to the house of my friend to keep my appointment. It was situated in a cheerful part of the city, enjoying the shade of a chenar tree, at the foot of which flowed a running stream, a gift so much prized by Persians in general, and by my Mirza, in particular, that he did not cease giving me hints shewing forth his delight at the neighbourhood of the tree and the rivulet, and thus persuading me of his felicity.

I found his house as small as poets' habitations frequently are; and judging from the smallness of his establishment, concluded that his means were on a similar scale. However, it is true in

this, as in other cases, that no compensation can be greater for poverty of circumstances than richness of intellect, and I felt, during the time I passed in my friend's company, that this truth was exemplified, for he led me to understand that he was a contented man, which explained why he was a cheerful one. He made the most of the few comforts he had about him. The room in which we sat, opened to the air with a broad sash, looking into a small court, where a fountain in miniature threw up its waters was, he assured me a perfect room, and that it faced the true Kebleh. His carpets, which appeared to be common felts, much worn, he asserted had once belonged to Shah Abbas's poet, therefore sitting upon them ought to engender poetry; and when we drank coffee, there was something curious in the coffee itself, as well as something worth remarking in the cups. His tobacco, he affirmed, was true Shiraz; the enamelled portrait of the houri on his pipe heads, he hinted, had been made from his own designs, and the couplets, in which allusion was made to smoke as an emblem of the vanity of life, he pointed

out as one of his happiest efforts at an epigram. Then he exhibited choice bits of penmanship, a whole ode of Hafiz, written by the hand of Shireen Kalem, the first artist of his day, and part of the Gulistan of Sadi, written by one who he asserted had been often paid a miscal of gold for every line he transcribed.

My friend was, indeed, so full of the blessings he possessed, both mental and physical, that I was obliged gradually to wean him from the pleasure he evidently enjoyed in describing them, and urged him to begin that story which it had been the object of my visit to hear. I was obliged, however, still to have patience, for he started when he heard the voice of the Muezzin from the summit of a neighbouring mosque, calling the faithful to prayers; and being, in the forms at least, a good mussulman, he retired to his praying carpet spread for him in a corner, leaving me to exercise as much patience as I could, until the ceremony was over; when, refreshed by the exercise, my friend again seated himself, and exclaiming, "*Bismillah*, in the name of Allah," he at once began as follows :

SHAH ABBAS, HIS JESTER AND THE MAN  
WITH ONE THUMB.

IN the reign of Shah Abbas the great, Persia was indeed a kingdom ; and why ? because it really possessed a king. He was not like one of those miserable sovereigns we see now a days with little power, less importance, and no dignity, who live only to amass treasure for themselves, keeping their subjects in abject poverty. No—he was liberal and magnificent in his projects as well as in his actions. His enjoyment consisted in seeing his people prosperous and happy, and he watched over their safety as a father does over his family, or as the elder of a tribe over his encampment. His name is still in the mouth of every Persian, from the first khan to the lowest muleteer : the stranger can scarcely travel a step without being shewn some mosque erected by his piety, some caravanserai built for the purposes of hospitality, or some aqueduct planned for the public good.

With all this, he had one great fault :—he was extremely suspicious and consequently jealous.

He was only great in the eyes of the world, for in truth he was often a prey to petty passions which led to the most nefarious acts.

It was during one of those fits of suspicion that he put to death his eldest son the heir to his throne, Séfi Mirza, an act which he never ceased to deplore, and which so embittered every moment of his existence, that he became a prey to melancholy. His courtiers scarcely ventured to approach him—his temper, which before this act had always been sufficiently open and affable, now became sour and morose, and like the beast of prey, which having once tasted blood longs for more, so after having been guilty of this one great crime, he became cruel and blood-thirsty, and perpetrated many others of similar character.

The grand vizier of the time, a man of wisdom, was not slow in foreseeing the misery which this fatal propensity in his royal master would bring upon the country, and he did not cease night and day thinking how he might avert the impending evil. He felt that he himself, as well as the principal

omrahs and officers of the court, were in danger of becoming victims to the Shah's suspicions, and he determined to confer with them in secret upon the best method of arresting the calamity.

He was persuaded that the foundation of his majesty's character was benevolent, and, therefore, did not despair of giving it a new bias. He had known him social, open to the charms of wit and humour, and easily fascinated by the sallies of buffoonery.

Having called a secret meeting of the most influential men, and having collected them in one of the private apartments of his palace, he addressed them as follows :

“ Something must be done, otherwise our lives are not safe, even for an hour. There is not one of us, who upon the least suspicion, may not receive the bastinado upon the soles of his feet. Our livers have been sufficiently dried up with apprehension, and our souls have been made to drink the waters of bitterness. Let us engender one vigorous thought, and be agreed upon what we had best do.”

It was not necessary to make such an appeal



to men already sufficiently alive to the dangers which awaited them, and upon hearing the vizier's words they were unanimously applauded, and like birds apprehending a storm, seek shelter near the land, so they all looked up to the superior sagacity of the minister as their best security.

“In truth,” said one, “this Shah is not the king we once knew him. The Shah of former days was full of mirth and good nature—now he is become a lion.”

“What say you?” said another, “a lion?—a lion has feeling, a lion has the thought of a man—this is an animal that has not his equal in ferocity.”

“*Bah ! bah ! bah !*” exclaimed a third shaking his head, “a wonderful youth was he when first he came to the throne ! nothing like him had ever been seen : he had a heart then, and never would take away life except from necessity ; he was then too good for a King of Persia—now he is too bad for a King of Jehanum.”

“What shall we do then?” said a serious looking courtier, “the business is difficult ; if Allah does not come to our aid, we shall be left

walking round our little fingers to the end of eternity." Then addressing himself to the grand vizier he said with a beseeching voice, "For God's sake, you who are the anchor of the state, and who are wise as Aflatoon, and who are the grand-father of Lokman, speak, and give freedom to our souls!"

"What can I say?" said the minister who all the while had been playing with his beads, and twisting the end of his beard with his fingers; "let us do something, for mercy's sake! I have been making a thought, Allah best knows whether it be good or bad; we, poor benighted mortals as we are, anxiously bestir ourselves to act according to our limited views, when destiny is, perhaps, ready to meet us face to face with something quite the reverse!"

"What is your thought? for the sake of Allah, speak!" exclaimed the assembly with one voice.

"My opinion is this," said the grand vizier, "that some attempt should be made to divert the Shah's mind from its present melancholy mood, and to turn it again into that channel which is its natural bent—I mean mirth and

humour. I have in my eye a burnt father of a jack-pudding, who would make even the blessed Hussein laugh, so thorough a master is he at the ridicule of the beard."

"You have opened my eyes," said one; "you mean Kaka Pembeh."

"You have said right," exclaimed a second, "oh the bankrupt dog!"

"There is not his equal," said a third; "such a mad fellow as he does not exist."

"I die of his jokes daily," roared another, "I faint when I see him."

"He is the man," said the vizier; "you have decided truly; your humble servant has thought that if we can throw this fellow into the Shah's path, without any appearance of design, that he will not fail to attract his majesty's attention, and should he once succeed in making him laugh, we shall again be enabled to put our caps on one side, and our mental agonies will be at an end."

"You have judged right," exclaimed the assembly, "wonderful thought has he made! marvellous vizier! Persian statesmen after

all! what is equal to them! such a lord of reflection has never before been seen!"

These and such like exclamations escaped from the lips of the assembled courtiers upon hearing the grand vizier's proposal; and they immediately agreed to place the whole conduct of the affair into his hands, with an expression of their readiness to further the scheme to the utmost of their power.

It was not long after this conference that the vizier sent for the individual in question, and with his usual ability proceeded, first to prepare his mind for the part he was to act, and then by a promise of proper rewards to secure him in his interest.

*Kaka Pembeh*, or Brother Cottonwool was a *sobriquet* given to him in consequence of his having negro blood in his veins, which exhibited itself prominently in the woolly nature of his hair and beard. Negroes are generally styled *Kaka* or brother, an appellation springing from a religious and charitable motive, but in this instance arising from a desire to make the buffoon more conspicuous, for in truth his name was Mahomed Ali, and his father was an Arab of Abusheher in the Persian gulf, but

it seems the mother's blood predominated, and hence his name. He was by nature cast into the mould of a buffoon and merry-andrew, his features denoted broad humour, and, consequently, his commonest speech produced a laugh. He was a man without malice, although nothing would arrest him were he deeply set upon a jest, and as it was the fashion to exercise practical jokes upon his person, so upon occasions he would return the compliment with interest. His early youth had been full of adventure, he having travelled far and wide through many parts of Asia.

He had been residing now some time at Ispahan a sort of hanger-on upon the houses of the great Khans about the court, of whose nightly assemblies he formed the principal charm, when he was fixed upon by the grand vizier to fulfil the part we have before mentioned. In his person he was short, having a large head, long hands and arms, bandy-legs, and broad feet; his nose was large and aquiline, his eyes were uncommonly brilliant, his beard scanty, and his ears enormous. His voice was loud and full of comic intonations, his laugh was pec-

toral, and his pathos came from the nose. Altogether, no one who was not decidedly a churl, could refrain from merriment the moment he opened his mouth to speak, although in truth he often said things which any one else might say without being remarked.

In an incredible short space of time, it is said, that the vizier's scheme succeeded; Kaka Pembek had become as necessary to Shah Abbas as the air he breathed. The delight which his majesty found in having the melancholy of his thoughts diverted into a channel of mirth was so great, that his character appeared to be changed. The court, the city, the nation, in short, everything animate and inanimate throughout Persia, became directly or indirectly influenced by this alteration in the King's humour, and the buffoon was worshipped with almost divine honours. Under the sage guidance of the vizier, he led his royal master on by well-timed flattery, by familiarity tempered by servility, by broad humour directed by design, to do precisely what the minister desired, a circumstance which

mainly tended to draw off his Majesty's mind from affairs of state to occupy it with matters of minor importance.

Shah Abbas had been brought up in the belief common to Mahommedans, that madmen are influenced by a divine spirit, and as Kaka Pembeh was looked upon as one tinged with insanity, the King was ready to allow him the privileges due to his character. The Kaka had ingeniously made his majesty believe that the Shah in Persia was what Caliph Haroun al Raschid had been in Arabia, and thus led him on to interest himself in the same pursuits. Opening his heart one day, the King avowed that excitement and occupation were necessary in order to dispel that melancholy which was apt to prey upon his spirits, and, therefore, he desired him to go into the highways and bye-ways of his capital, and among his subjects search out objects whose histories might afford him amusement, and perchance call for his interference and protection.

The Kaka was overjoyed at this communication, for it was precisely the object to which the grand vizier had directed his views, and,

on that very day, he betook himself to the great high-road leading from the north of Persia to the capital, where he posted himself near the fountain which stands at the entrance of the city, by which caravans and travellers were wont to pass. Accompanied by a servant, he seated himself at about the hour of sunset among a group of others, who were come to await the arrival of their friends, and smoked his kalia to wile away the time. He had not sat long ere he heard distant bells announcing the approach of a caravan, and soon after it appeared accompanied by the usual travellers, and its mule and camel drivers ; but he perceived no one with whom he might conveniently enter into conversation, until at the very tail of the procession, he discovered a way-worn, care-stricken individual dressed as a Mollah, whose dusty garments announced him fresh from a long journey, and who turned the tired beast which he bestrode to the fountain, where they both refreshed themselves by a draught of which they appeared to be much in need.

Kaka Pembeh immediately approached and gave him the usual salutation of peace,



which the unhappy looking traveller answered with alacrity, as if charmed to have found any one who would take an interest in him.

“Whence come you?” said the Kaka.

“As Allah is great,” said the traveller, with a sigh, “I come from afar. I come from Ardebil, and my soul is bitter.”

“How is this,” said the Kaka, looking at his Mollah’s turban, “a servant of the blessed Prophet with a bitter soul! what news may this be?”

“So it is,” said the traveller, “and what more can I say? The apple may look green on the tree, but if it be rotten inside it becomes unwholesome. The day was unlucky when I left Ardebil.”

“What words are these,” said the Kaka, with a look of surprise—“sit down for God’s sake, and tell me your story—recollect this is the seat of government—here is a King, here justice is to be had. Men do not go about eating dirt at this rate, when a despotic Shah is at hand, ready to redress the wrongs of his subjects.”

Upon which handing him his kalia, which

his servant had freshly prepared, the melancholy man first inhaling a long and welcome stream of smoke which seemed at once to soften his care, began as follows :

“ I am a mollah of Ardebil—my name is Ahmed, and Mollah Ahmed is well known as one of the most zealous attendants at the tomb of the ever renowned Sheikh Sefi, upon whom be blessings. Your slave is the father of a daughter, and for his sins, of the most beautiful virgin that ever was created—a pearl, a rose, an angel, an houri of paradise—in short so perfect a creature was never before known—for his misfortune he became acquainted with one who called himself a man of God, but who in truth is a child of the devil. A wretch, who clothing himself as a priest, was in truth an impostor, and a brother of Satan, and who after exercising wiles and incantations, such only as a demon could practice, succeeded in deceiving my treasure of a daughter and running away with her. I hear he fled hitherwards, and I come to seek her. That is my story—what more can I say !”

“ Allah ! Allah !” exclaimed the Kaka, “ this

is a bad business, Ispahan is a large city, and rogues abound. How are you to find your daughter?"

"What can I say," said the Mollah; "if my luck is good I may find her, if not, the world has turned its back upon me, and my soul will dry up."

"Have you any means of discovering the thief," said the Kaka musing. "Has he any particular mark by which he may be known?"

"He is not different from other men in the face," said the traveller, "excepting that he looks like the most artful of villains; he dresses like a man of the law, and is called the Mollah Kemgoo—his principal mark is that he has no thumb on his right hand, but he takes good care to keep that well concealed."

"God is great!" said the Kaka, "and what is more, merciful! let us trust in Him. Tell me where you are to be found, and who knows! destiny may have much good in store for you."

"I have been recommended to go to the caravanserai, the resort of the Tabriz merchants, and thither by the blessing of Allah I

will bend my steps, and if you can render me any assistance I am sure you are too good a Mussulman to refuse performing so praiseworthy an act."

"Upon my eyes be it," said Kaka Pembeh, as he rose and walked away, fully determined not to let so good an opportunity escape of interesting his royal master in the fate of an ill-used man, and inducing him to bring an offender to justice.

As soon as he appeared before Shah Abbas kneeling down and kissing the ground, he exclaimed :

"Your slave is an humble sacrifice to the Centre of the Universe—his luck is on the rise—he has met with a most fortunate misfortune, and his majesty may now defile the grave of a rogue's father to his heart's content."

"How is this, O little man!" exclaimed the Shah, "where have you been all this while—are your ears wooing the knife, or your feet the stick that you have kept the Shah waiting?"

"By the soul of the King!" exclaimed the Kaka, "if the royal impatience is thirsting for blows, it may soon be requited by beating real

flesh and blood, instead of humble Cotton-wool." Upon which he gave a faithful account of his meeting with the poor Mollah from Ardebil.

The Shah reflected for a while, and said,

"Well! burnt father! what is to be done?"

"As I am your sacrifice," exclaimed the Kaka, "although by the blessing of Allah, thumbs are plentiful in Ispahan, still through your royal condescension, wit is not less so; a man cannot bury his right hand in a dish of rice without showing whether he has a thumb or not."

"How is this?" said the King, "among the twenty score of hands which exist at the foot of my throne, where will you find the deficient thumb you seek?"

The Kaka then explained a variety of schemes he had formed for the discovery of the culprit; among others he recommended one as the most eligible—that of inviting all the men of the law in Ispahan to an entertainment, when he might, at leisure, make a scrutiny of each man's right hand, as he handled the food before him.

"As I hope for your majesty's favour," said

be, "it is plain that all Mollahs seek the royal countenance ; they all love eating, and let it not be denied, they do not dislike drinking, therefore, every one with the turban and the cross-breasted coat will be sure to attend ; thus the culprit may be detected. The good destiny of the Shah will not fail to bring this act of royal condescension to a happy conclusion."

The Shah, though not quite convinced of the efficacy of this scheme, still acceded to it. He felt that by such doings his melancholy was dissipated ; he thus found himself freed from the trammels that usually beset royalty, and by becoming more mixed up with his subjects, knowing their wants, and being informed of their modes of life, his heart expanded into yearnings of benevolence to which it had long been a stranger. At the same time, he did not allow himself to relax from those feelings which despotism and unlimited authority engender, and whilst he granted the Kaka more familiarity than he did to others who were permitted to approach his person, still he ever held over him the rod of his authority. He said to him,

“Well! so be it—invite all the Mollahs, beginning from the Sheikh al Islam and the Cazi to the lowest scribe of the law;—it is probable that the rogue from Ardebil will be among them, so we may seize him and administer justice;—but should he not be there and your scheme fail, then put your trust in Allah, for the Shah’s beard is not to be laughed at!”

The Kaka immediately made his prostration, and taking his own beard into his hand, said to himself, “Now open well your eyes, O man! let this beard shew its wisdom! the eyes of the world as well as those of the Shah are upon you, and should you not succeed, you will be called dog’s father, and cur’s whelp—as Allah is Allah—if the Shah laughs not, the Kaka cries, that is certain!”

A great entertainment was forthwith prepared in the Saloon of Forty Pillars, and every priest, scribe, muezzin and mollah, from the Sheikh al Islam to the lowest scribe, were ordered to appear on a given day to partake of the royal hospitality. The fountains in the great court were set to play, the marble basins were filled

to the brim, and carpets were spread for the reception of the guests.

The Shah took post in a small apartment which looked into the saloon, thus seeing all that was going on without being himself visible, whilst Kaka Pembah was employed in ordering the disposition of the feast, and superintending the accommodation of the company.

The guests came in succession, and were seated according to their respective ranks;—the feast was served by the royal servants, and consisted principally of those plentiful dishes of rice, those highly spiced and perfumed pillaus, for which the reign of Shah Abbas was famous. At the bismillah or grace, which was audibly pronounced by the Cazi in chief, every man's right hand was straightway plunged into the smoking rice—a moment eagerly expected by the Kaka, who beginning at the uppermost seats and proceeding regularly down the line, began a severe scrutiny upon thumbs. He gazed with secret, though intense interest, when to his utmost surprize he perceived, at the first glance, on looking at the



Cazi of Ispahan, one only second in dignity to the Sheikh al Islam, that his right hand was without a thumb.

“How is this,” said Cottonwool, “no thumb to the Cazi—this cannot be.” Still he looked, and still he was sure that he was not mistaken. He perceived the holy man with his hand up to his very wrist in rice, and remarked at every handful which he drew out, in order to make a ball fitted to the orifice of his mouth, that the thumb so useful in giving that ball an impetus inwards, was wanting. In utter astonishment he proceeded to look down the line, and after having made a close inspection of every man’s right hand, he found that the Cazi was the only one present who wanted a thumb. This functionary was a small decrepit man, old and withered, and apparently so weak, that it was quite evident he never could have run away with any man’s daughter—still the Kaka thought it right to make inquiries, and it appeared that in fact he had arrived only a few days previously from the very Ardebil in question. Brother Cottonwool was at his wit’s end, being thrown into a state of great in-

decision how to proceed. His buffoonery, however, came to his aid, and as it was his object at once to amuse his royal master and to save himself from disgrace, he quickly stole from the assembly, and throwing himself at the feet of the Shah, with mock despair in his countenance, announced that in his chief justice, his majesty possessed an undoubted abductor.

The King was so much amused by this announcement, that he fairly fell back on his seat from excess of laughter, and when he turned his eyes towards the Cazi, who unconscious of having given offence, was filling himself with rice and other good things, observing his little puckered up person, scarcely robust enough to sustain the large turban with which his head was encumbered, his paroxysms returned with redoubled force.

“Ill-favoured wretch!” said he to his buffoon, “what intelligence is this? Am I to believe that that man yonder, no stronger than the reed of the desert has borne away a daughter of the faithful by force?”

“As I am your sacrifice,” exclaimed the Kaka, “your slave is also bewildered—but what can I say? he has but just arrived from

Ardebil, and he has only one thumb! It is plain this must be the culprit."

"Go and ascertain," said the Shah, "let the object of this entertainment be proclaimed, and if the most venerable the Cazi be the culprit, let him abide by the punishment due unto his crime."

The Kaka soon returned to the assembly, and as the eating had now subsided, and men's appetites were satisfied, he with a loud voice proclaimed the commands of the King, and explained the object of the meeting. No sooner had the explanation been made, than it was pleasant to remark the universal inspection which each man made of his own proper hands, as if he required some new light to assure him, that they were whole and un mutilated.

The Cazi alone appeared blank and woe-stricken; he glared at his thumbless hand with dire anticipation of what was about to happen; he felt, that however innocent he might be, yet he knew that suspicion, once awakened in the breast of a wilful and despotic monarch, was sure to bring mischief in its train, and already he trembled.

A general shew of hands having been made,

and the Cazi being the only one present who came under the description of the culprit, the Kaka desired him to arise and follow; which the grave judge immediately did amid the suppressed titters of the assembly, accompanied by the stroking down of beards to prevent an utter explosion of laughter.

When the Cazi appeared before the King, he knelt down; then having kissed the ground, arose and stood before him. "How is this," said Shah Abbas, "what words are these which are come to the King's ears? A Mollah with one thumb, has fled from Ardebil with a true believer's daughter. We hear that thou art just arrived from that city, and of all the Mollahs of Ispahan, thou alone hast only one thumb: can this be true?"

"*Astafarallah!* God forbid," exclaimed the Cazi, "what words are these? As this less than the least is the humblest of your slaves, and as he takes the holy prophet to witness, he declares that there is no truth in the accusation—how can it be? look at my poor weak body and tottering limbs, do they speak the bold seducer? besides is it not well known that from a child I have been a cripple; was

it not said, when your slave was appointed to be the Cazi of Ispahan, that I was not eligible for the situation, because it was asked how can even-handed justice be expected from a man who has not his full complement of fingers? Such calumnies as these ought not to be allowed to pass current in your majesty's blessed reign."

The Shah, who could scarcely contain his laughter at the awful plight in which he beheld his judge, would very probably have dismissed him without further words, but the Kaka foreseeing that if such were the termination of this day's ceremonial, it was possible that the Shah's displeasure would fall upon himself, with great humility stepped forward, and remarked, that since his reverence the Cazi had pleaded feebleness as proof of his inability to commit the alleged crime, it became advisable that before the Shah, and in the face of the whole assembly, he should exhibit some proof of that feebleness, and thus convince the world that he was innocent.

"Upon my eyes be it," said the Cazi, overjoyed at having this opportunity afforded him of proving his innocence.

“So be it,” said the King.

Upon which the Kaka, having already planned in his mind a trick which he was sure would prove palatable to the humour of his master reconducted the Cazi to his place in the assembly, and then with great gaiety of purpose, announced that it was the command of the Shah, in order to give the Cazi a fair chance of exculpating himself from the odium of an imputed crime, that he should exhibit before the assembly such undoubted proofs of the weakness of his person, that no one should go away without being satisfied of the falseness of the accusation. To that effect, it was ordained that he should take upon his back the very reverend the Sheikh al Islam, and proceed with him once up and once down the great walk in the court; should he succeed in performing this feat, the trial for the imputed crime would proceed. Should he fail, he would be pronounced innocent.

It may well be imagined how great was the sensation produced both upon the Shah himself, and upon the assembled dignitaries when the Kaka had proclaimed this unexpected command.

The Sheikh al Islam was a very stout man, a remarkably fat and heavy man, who wore upon his head one of the largest of turbans, and who was as great a contrast to the spare diminutive Cazi as one man can be to another. He became suddenly inflated with anger at this attack upon his dignity, but fearing to show his feelings, observed as he knew himself to be by the Shah in person, he smothered them in the best manner he was able, and clothed his face with as many smiles as he could command, looking stern and indignant when he eyed the jester, but pleased and approving when his face was in such a position as to be seen by the King. Both the personages came forward, mortified by the merriment of the assembly, which was greatly increased by the countenance and words of the buffoon. The Kaka helped the greater man to mount the lesser, whose knees bending under his burthen, could scarcely sustain the shock of reception. Tottering onward a few steps, amidst the half suppressed acclamations, jeers and laughter of the spectators, for they were aware of the immediate presence of the Shah, the Cazi was

gradually edged on by the Kaka to the margin of the fountain, whose waters ran in a deep marble basin, and there he fairly broke down, whilst his burthen was carefully tilted into the stream.

The heavy man disappeared beneath the foam of an immense splash, and commenced a series of flounderings and evolutions, such as had never before been seen performed by either fish or flesh since Persia was a kingdom.

The effect which this scene had upon the Shah was precisely that which the Kaka had intended to produce—his majesty was convulsed with laughter. When he perceived his chief of the law performing his gambols in the water, he fairly rolled back in ecstasy, extending his hands and crying out *buss, buss*, enough, enough! as a signal to his attendants that the sport should cease. When a little come to himself, he ordered the Kaka to stand before him, and as soon as he appeared, exclaimed :

“ Burnt father! would you kill the Shah, what have you done? ill-favoured being! do we appoint dignitaries of the law that you should drown them? go, dismiss the assembly, send the



Cazi to his post—you have made your face white for to-day ; but open well your eyes, you have not caught the culprit yet, and justice is still to be executed—go, and do the Shah’s bidding.”

The assembly soon dispersed, and the jester immediately retreated to give an account of the morning’s adventures to the grand vizier ; but although pleased at the success which had attended his endeavours to excite the Shah’s mirth, still he was perplexed lest he should not after all succeed in discovering the real man with one thumb.

On his road thither, he met one of his acquaintance, a broker with whom he formerly had had dealings, who stopping him seized him by the sleeve and said, “ My aga !” (for he was so called since he had acquired influence at court,) “ your slave begs leave to lay before you a circumstance which will require your consideration.”

“ How is this !” said Cottonwool looking correspondingly dignified, “ what goods have you on hand ?”

“ Goods ! goods indeed !” exclaimed the

other, "such a commodity has never been seen at the market of Ispahan since the days of Leilah or Shireen; your Lordship must come and inspect it."

"Speak, man!" exclaimed the Kaka, "speak out clear and without writhing;—what would you say?"

"The truth is," said the broker, "a merchant from Georgia has arrived with a maiden for sale—so beautiful, so accomplished, so heart-enslaving, that since the world began, nothing like her was ever seen. She would be fit for the holy prophet himself, but that cannot be, she must belong to the Shah—she can and must be possessed by none else."

The Kaka was immediately convinced that this might prove a fortunate discovery; for if the maiden were really so perfect as the broker represented, then he might hope that this new circumstance might draw off the Shah's mind from the recollection of the injured Mollah of Ardebil, and he himself be extricated from an unpleasant dilemma.

"Where is she to be seen?" said the Kaka.

“ Here, hard by,” replied the other ; “ the merchant lives in a miserable den among the ruins ; he fears lest his prize should be wrested from him, and his head goes round and round with apprehension. We must approach with caution ; he himself is a misfortune, for he does not allow his left eye to know what his right is looking at, so cunning is he.”

“ Let us go, let us see,” said the Kaka with impatience ; “ if all you tell me be a lie, by the beard of the King, your heart shall jump out of your mouth. I have said it.”

Upon this, after making many devious windings through streets of ruins, situated on the borders of the Zainderood, they stopped at a low door, at which the broker rapped.

“ In the name of Allah, who is there ?” said a voice from within.

“ I am here,” said the broker.

“ *Bismillah*, come in,” said the voice ; upon which, unbarring the gate, it was speedily opened, and the Kaka and the broker bending their heads under the low arch, entered and stood in the presence of a middle-sized sharp-looking man, with black tufted beard and eye brows,

•

dressed as a Georgian, having the characteristic dagger hanging on his thigh, and his white sash tied with pendant ends before; but he wore over all a large Persian cloak or *barúni*.

"You are welcome," said the Georgian eyeing Kaka Pembek from head to foot, "may your shadow never be less," this done, he invited his visitors to be seated, which injunction they obeyed upon very indifferent carpets, spread in a still more indifferent apartment.

After the usual salutations, the broker whispering the Georgian, informed him of the name of his visitor, and the object of his visit, dwelling much upon the influence which he had acquired over the Shah, and the importance of securing his good graces. The merchant upon this became very obsequious and attentive to the Kaka, and flattered him with so much perseverance, that it was evident he had received his education in Persia, although he called himself a Georgian. In the mean while, Cottonwool who never accosted a man without first observing whether he had a thumb on his right hand, became very

observant of the merchant. He did not succeed at first in acquiring any information, for, whether by accident or precaution, it so happened that the Georgian always managed to keep his right hand covered with the sleeve of his cloak. During the whole time they sat and talked, he could not see his hand ; when they smoked, the Georgian managed to keep it still covered, and every gesture was invariably executed with his left hand.

At length they conversed upon the subject of the maiden, and owing to the description which the merchant gave of her perfections, the Kaka became extremely anxious to see her, the more so as his suspicions were roused by the now evident desire with which the Georgian concealed his hand. He had not forgotten the story he had heard from the weary traveller of the caravan, and began to hope that he was now about to make an important discovery.

He was conducted into an inner room, where he found a woman veiled from head to foot who, from the attitude she had assumed,

seemed desirous of remaining concealed. The Georgian merchant approached her with respect, and requested her to unveil her face, informing her that the Shah's own agent and confidential servant had come to visit her on the part of his majesty. To this she deigned to give no answer, but only drew her veil the tighter over her face. He then adopted other language, and proceeded to command and insist ; a conduct which seemed to excite her utmost indignation, and she at length exclaimed,

“ I am no man's slave, neither yours nor the Shah's. I have been stolen from my home under false pretences, and if the King be just, he will protect me.”

Upon this the Kaka, approaching the Georgian, suddenly seized the pendant sleeve of his cloak, and said,

“ Withdraw the veil from her face, thus,” he at the same time pulling the sleeve from off his wrist, discovered that in fact he had no thumb on his right hand. The Georgian was at first astounded, but as the Kaka made the discovery in a manner calculated to

excite no lasting suspicion, he continued to insist upon the removal of the veil, and was about to use force, when the Kaka exclaimed,

“Enough! enough! we will report what we have seen to the Shah, and then await to ascertain what his authority, when exercised, may produce!” Upon this, accompanied by the broker, he quitted the house, mounted his mule, and straightway took his departure.

Perfectly overjoyed at the discovery he had made, his first care was to proceed to the royal palace and procure a band of the King's naskchies or executioners, who accompanied him forthwith to the caravanserai of the Tabriz merchants; there he found the Ardebil Mollah, who had almost given up in despair, the hope of evermore finding his daughter. Ordering a mule to be provided for him, the jester made the poor man mount, and without saying a word of his discovery, or of the object he had in view, proceeded to the house of the Georgian merchant. He there dismounted, and stationing the executioners around the house, ordered their officer to

knock at the door, which was done with a tone of so much authority, as to make the merchant within tremble with apprehension.

“What has happened?” said he, keeping the door closed.

“On the part of the Shah open,” said the officer.

As soon as the door was opened, the Kaka ordered the Ardebil priest to advance, and placing him face to face with the merchant, said,

“In the name of Allah, is that the seducer of your daughter?”

The recognition which took place between the parties immediately explained all.

“By the beard of Ali,” said the Mollah, “that is the rogue who stole away my daughter.”

“How is this?” exclaimed the Georgian, attempting to maintain his imposture, “who are you that come here and attack a poor man in his own house?”

“Seize him,” said the Kaka to the executioners, “bind him, and strike him on the mouth, should he speak again.” Then heedless of further



interruption, followed by the Ardebil Mollah, he entered the room where the maiden was confined;—she at first retreated to the farthest corner of the apartment, but when she perceived the Mollah, she ran, and seizing the skirt of his coat, kissed it, and exclaimed,

“Oh my father, my father! thanks be to Allah, my destiny has changed.”

After the first greetings between father and child had subsided, the Kaka ordered the whole party to be instantly conducted to the palace, with injunctions that the Georgian merchant should be strictly watched, lest he should attempt to escape.

As soon as they had reached the palace, Cottonwool who had always a ready admittance to the presence of the Shah, went in to him and prostrating himself, exclaimed, as he clothed his face with a look of uncommon archness,

“Kebleh of the world! as I am your sacrifice, your slave has found him—a burnt father with one thumb is in readiness without.”

“What news is this,” said the Shah, “do

you laugh at our beard, or has truth for once visited your lips."

"By the King's jikeh!\* by the salt which I eat, by the soul of the Prophet, your less than the least speaks truth." Upon which he related the whole circumstance of the fortunate discovery he had made, and expatiated largely upon the charms and virtues of the maiden.

"Bring them before us," said his majesty, and drawing himself up on his seat, awaited the appearance of the culprit and his accuser.

When the Georgian entered, he eyed every thing around with a stealthy look, but at the same time clothed his face with a look of the most abject humility. The Mollah walked in with confidence and respect, whilst his daughter remained in the back ground, entirely veiled.

"Whence come you, O little man!" exclaimed the Shah to the Georgian; "what is your native place?"

"Your slave is from Georgia," answered the other, "he does not lie."

\* The jewelled ornament on the royal head dress.

“Bring hither the *felek*,”\* exclaimed the Shah, who had a quick perception of any provincial or national peculiarity, “we shall soon see whether you be a Georgian or no.”

The self-called Georgian taking fright, fell abjectly upon his knees and exclaimed,

“Pardon, pardon, your slave is from Shiraz—he has eaten dirt, [and claims forgiveness.”

“Well!” said the Shah, “and so you are a child of Shiraz, O dog without a saint. Is it thus you lie in the presence of the Shah? Tell me, wherefore did you run away with this man’s daughter?”

Upon this the accused entered into a long explanation, evidently invented for the occasion, until the Shah, whose object was to be amused, as well as to administer justice, stopped him, and said :

“Now, man, open well your eyes—this is no child’s play—you are evidently a rogue without compare; but, speak the truth for once—we will

\* The *felek* is a pole with a noose in the middle, through which the culprit’s feet are passed when bastinadoed.

listen to your whole history—if you lie, do you see that (pointing to the felek) we beat till day and night will be all one to you—speak the truth, and you will enjoy the Shah’s condescension. I wish particularly to be informed wherefore you have only one thumb.”

“By my eyes,” said the rogue, “whatever the King commands, so will I obey.” Thus saying, he began his story in the following words.

---

STORY RELATED BY ALI MURAD, THE  
MAN-STEALER.

“MAY it please the Kebleh of the world! I was born in Shiraz—my father was purveyor to the governor of that city, when your majesty first ascended the throne—my mother was a Georgian slave. Although my father had one wife, yet I was allowed to be brought up in the house, and was educated as his heir, for he had no other children. I went to school at the mosque in our neighbourhood, and was well advancing in my learning, when

my father, who had acquired considerable wealth by his purveyorship, in an ill-fated hour for my happiness, married a second wife—the widow of a Khan of some celebrity. Being young and handsome, she gave herself great airs, and finding that I was only the son of a slave, she expressed herself shocked at my presence, and in a storm of virtuous indignation, insisted upon my immediate removal. My father, who was rather a weak man, fearing lest some misfortune should happen to his new wife, who to his joy soon promised him a second child, acceded to her request, and I was expelled the house, without any further provision than fifty tomauns in my purse, good clothes to my back, a mule to ride upon, and a letter of recommendation to my father's brother, who was established at Bagdad as a druggist. I was then not more than seventeen years old, and being heedless of the future, was not sorry to travel and see the world. I will not say that I was a model of good conduct, for in truth, Kebleh of the world! I had fallen into bad company even at that early age. My companions, who were a set of ill-

conducted youths, taught me to laugh at sacred things. We played tricks upon priests, ran away with their slippers and lanterns, and gave great offence by worrying dumb animals. In short, under their tuition I became a complete scape-grace, and was looked up to as the principal authority in all matters of licentiousness. When I left Shiraz, my father, a quiet easy man, was glad to get rid of me, and, therefore, did not confer the distinction of accompanying me out of the town; that ceremony was performed by my associates, who took their leave after we had finished a whole skin of wine, much to the annoyance of some of the soberer part of the caravan. Having reached Bagdad, I immediately conveyed myself and baggage to the house of my uncle, who received me with kindness, and gave me a corner in his house to sleep in; but I brought nothing to him, excepting my own precious person, for what money I possessed, was dissipated by the roadside, long before I reached my destination. He would have been willing to bring me up to his

business, and offered me a share in his shop, but although I should have rejoiced in the profits, yet I could not prevail upon myself to undertake the drudgery also. I had no turn for weighing out pepper, cinnamon and drugs, and cared neither for red or blue dyes. However, I lived at my uncle's expence, and passed my time in coffee-houses and in pleasure parties on the river, which so little suited his pocket or his habits of business, that one day he told me fairly, either that I must make myself useful to him, or leave his house. I preferred the latter alternative, and accordingly with a more plentiful supply of money than I was entitled to, (for my uncle was a liberal man) I left Bagdad with a caravan for Mosoul, intending to make my way to Constantinople, which I knew to be the headquarters for men of idleness, pleasure and ingenuity like myself. I found no one among the travellers of the caravan who suited my humour, for they were all merchants whose minds were absorbed in their calculations and hopes of gain, but at Mosoul, we were joined by a wild character, in dress and habit:

a wandering dervish, as rare a hypocrite as ever washed himself five times a day and counted his beads for the inspection of the public.

“My youth and good-for-nothing appearance doubtless attracted his attention, and before many days had elapsed, he made me his confidant and invited me to become his companion. He assured me that he lived a merry life, full of variety and adventure, and that his principal resource lay in the credulity and weakness of mankind. He worked principally upon their fears and religious apprehensions, and asserted that there was scarcely a town or village which, if well begged, did not yield a handsome livelihood at least for one week, and that too without risk of blows or fractured limbs. When we reached Diarbekr, we took leave of the caravan, and quitting the high road, visited small towns and little frequented habitations. My companion having observed a village that owned two minarets and a bath, he there determined to make an essay upon the credulity of the natives. He approached it after the usual manner of dervishes by winding his horn, an accomplishment which, as we sat by the way-



side, he imparted to me, and then raised the cry of Hoo! and Allah ho Akbar! and Allah, Allah! Spreading his skin upon the ground near the mosque, we there established ourselves. The inhabitants, particularly the women, came to see us, and brought us presents of bread, milk and honey—these were, however, but little suited to the taste of the dervish, who required more substantial food. He exclaimed with a proud toss of the head, shaking his hand horizontally at the same time, ‘I will sell their fathers and mothers, before two days are over, should they not supply us better than this.’ He then gradually began to make his wants known. He first asked for eggs, sour milk, and coffee, after which his demands increased to rice, fowls and lamb. A few eggs were brought, of which we made a good meal, and we also received coffee—but no rice, fowls, or lamb. My companion in consequence turned his eyes towards the small terrace on the mosque, and having selected a firm portion of the parapet for the performance of his intended trick, he said to me :

“ ‘ Now you shall see,’ upon that he began to

cry out in his very loudest voice, 'Allah, Allah! come, come, come to my assistance, I am poor, I am miserable—I am a dervish—I want rice—I want fowls—I want mutton.' Many persons were collected, but they did not seem much inclined to listen to his call, when projecting his body over the parapet, he made an apparent effort to throw himself over, bawling all the while, 'I want rice—I want meat—I want sour milk!' This frightened the credulous peasants, who between their fear of having the blood of a dead man to answer for, and that of not fulfilling the well known duties of hospitality to a stranger, came running towards us with the provisions we required, and thus before many minutes had elapsed we were provided with luxuries, even more than we could well consume.

"We lived happily for some time at this village, and having exhausted the good will of the inhabitants, proceeded to an adjacent town, which we had previously visited, and which could boast of five respectable minarets, a handsome aga's house, two baths and a bazaar well supplied with merchandize. Here we expected to reap a

considerable harvest, for the place had not been lately visited by dervishes, and every thing promised well. However, my companion was mistaken ;—in vain did he make his wants known ; in vain did he cry, howl, and invoke, few were the presents we received. At length, swearing in great wrath at the town, its inhabitants, their fathers, grandfathers, and all their relations, he took a great oath, that he would defile their fowls, lambs, rice, sugar and coffee if he were not supplied before the day was over. Accordingly he informed me that he would pretend to throw himself from off the roof of the principal mosque, and to that effect requested me to stand behind, hold him fast by the leg when he should be leaning forward to his utmost, and thus prevent him from a real act of self-destruction ; adding, ‘ You will see what will follow.’

“ I had imbibed no great affection for my companion—he was in fact, a churlish, vulgar fellow, who only made use of me for his own advantage, and who having discovered how unsuccessful his own endeavours were without an accomplice, had secured me for that purpose,

and this was an occasion when my services were peculiarly wanted. Having by many preliminary exclamations and threats surrounded himself by a large crowd, he ascended, and then accosted them thus,

“ ‘ Miserable man that I am ! poor, wretched, and a wandering dervish ! hospitality is enjoined to all good mussulmans—no hospitality to me—oh ye men ! oh ye mussulmans ! I want rice, I want fowls, I want mutton—if you delay I’ll throw myself off ! I will die ! my blood be upon yourselves, your wives and children, your fathers, mothers and descendants—bring me rice—bring me mutton.’

“ Upon which, throwing himself forward, he seemed to hang to the parapet by one foot only, which as I stood behind I held with my utmost grasp. The crowd, however, remained unmoved.

“ At this moment, a thought rushed through my brain like lightning, I was excited to the utmost, I longed to make an impression on the mob, I suddenly let go the dervish’s foot, and giving him a slight push, over he went, still howling out rice, fowls and mutton, and down he fell on

the stones beneath. He lit upon his head, broke his neck, and became a breathless corpse.

“Kebleh of the world! you ought to have seen the sensation this event produced; in an instant hundreds ran together, and before a quarter of an hour had elapsed, the whole place was strewn with rice, fowls and provisions. I acted my part to perfection. I cried—I invoked—I tore my clothes and plucked my hair. Then taking possession of the dead body of the dervish, I treated it with all the consideration due to a saint and a martyr.

“The sympathies of the whole town were turned in my favour, and before the day closed I found that it only depended upon myself to live for the rest of my days upon the celebrity of this act, and be supported by the bounty of its inhabitants. I did not lose the advantages I had acquired. It was not necessary for me to cry out ‘fowls, rice and mutton,’ these things came to me in greater abundance than I could require—all I had to do was to remain a faithful hypocrite, and to act the part of one who had abandoned the world. I adopted the

character of the defunct, I wore his clothes, covered my head with his cap, and, impressed my features with his sanctimonious look. But, although at first overjoyed at my success yet I soon grew weary of this mode of life. I had become heartily tired of the inhabitants and the inhabitants of me, therefore, one fine morning before the cock crew, I shouldered my staff and blowing my horn, took my departure without saying a word to any one; a disregard to form being one of the expected qualities of a good wandering dervish.

“ On leaving this place, I adopted a new line of road, and having howled and begged my way through several towns and villages, at length found myself at Arzroum, a large city, the seat of a Pasha, and the great frontier town between Turkey and my native country. Here I found merchants both travelling and resident from all parts of Anadolli, and caravans passing to and fro almost daily from Constantinople and Smyrna to Persia, Georgia and even to Astrakan. Being tired of my vagabond life, I now determined to abandon the character of a dervish

and to appear as an honest man. Accordingly I exchanged my dress in the bazaar for that of a common person, and thus accoutred, I frequented the caravanserais, and endeavoured to make acquaintance with the merchants, hoping to strike into adventures more likely to lead to substantial fortune than the wild existence I had just abandoned.

“The merchants were cautious men, and did not like to associate with one whom nobody knew. The only account I could, with prudence, give of myself was to announce myself as nephew to a great druggist at Bagdad, but no one seemed to give heed to my tale. There was one merchant, however, whose trade and pursuits I could not at first ascertain, who frequently came to the coffee-house which I most frequented, and always inquired, ‘what news from Georgia?’ with him I at length became well acquainted.

“It was some time before I could discover the drift of his hints and observations, for he made many, but having heard that he was a great dealer and speculator in slaves, I began to divine his intentions; his object in truth was to secure

my services, as one of a gang who plied on the frontiers for slaves ; in short to make me a kidnapper.

“ He offered me a share in the profits of his trade, which were considerable, and which, indeed, needed to be such, since I found that the enterprises in which I should necessarily be involved were frequently accompanied by much danger. I hesitated for some time, for I did not like danger in any shape, but at length impelled by fate and necessity, I agreed to his terms.

“ The head-quarters of his operations was Akalziké, a small town situated on the Turkish frontiers of Georgia and Circassia, and thither it was proposed that I should join others in his pay acting under a sub-agent, who forwarded the slaves to him as fast as they were secured, to be assorted, some for the markets of the interior of Asia, others for Trebizond, thence to be forwarded by sea to Constantinople.

“ Having been provided with the proper clothing and arms, I left the merchant and proceeded with a small caravan to the place of my destination, which I reached without difficulty, although



I traversed on the way some of the wildest mountainous tracts that the imagination can conceive, and occasionally saw inhabitants whose fierce looks made me tremble with apprehension at the prospect of being invited to carry such personages away by force. I made myself known to the sub-agent, who soon introduced me to my future associates, all crimps by profession. They were a gang of ruffians, each one looking more a desperado than the other, whose only talk was of seizing, binding, striking and slaying. Every one had some act of violence to boast of, the mildest of which amounted to abduction. One boasted that he had bought a daughter and two sons from their father, who having tried to steal them back again, he had been obliged to slay. Another, having bought a wife from her husband asserted, that he had defeated the affectionate consort's scheme of separation by stealing him also, and thus rejoined the couple. Others vaunted their dexterity in entering houses, digging holes beneath the wall and carrying away every living soul they found within.

“ I inquired, with much anxiety, if violence

were always necessary, seeing that fighting had never been my profession; when to my great joy, I found such was by no means the case, for the inhabitants of Georgia, Circassia, and Mingrelia, particularly the latter, were so base and so utterly lost to all natural feeling, that they only reared families of children in the hope and with the intention of selling them to the Turks.

“ My associates were each equipped with a long rope, twisted round their person by way of girdle, for the purpose of securing such slaves as they might either steal or buy; and having acquired this badge of my trade, I was not long in being appointed to perform a piece of service on the Mingrelian frontier.

“ The sub-agent it seems had been in negotiation with a Mingrelian chief, who by a certain day was to deliver over a number of slaves for a stipulated sum, and I with others was appointed to proceed to a station among the mountains, and there remain concealed until we should hear from the Mingrelian that his victims were ready for seizure.

“ We were enjoined to be well on our guard; because this man was a notoriously licentious

character, the object of his present scheme being to raise a sum of money in order that he might have the means of entertaining a new mistress, whom in spite of every opposition, he was determined to instal in his house.

“The time being come, we took post in the thickest part of the forest, near the Mingrelian frontier. We were all well armed, well furnished with ropes, and kept our courage up by drinking ardent spirits. At length, on the second day after our arrival, as the shades of night approached, we heard a long shrill whistle at a distance, which my companions recognized as the signal agreed upon, and immediately proceeded in the direction whence it came. We were soon met by the chief in person, who assured us that the slaves were at hand, and presently after we perceived them coming down an adjacent slope in a confused and disorderly manner. They were twelve in number, and appeared to be in the last stage of drunkenness. To our astonishment, we discovered that they were priests, men of all ages, and all sizes, and these were transferred to us as our property.

“ Upon inspection they were found in no wise to answer our purpose. Some were old and grey-bearded, others short and crooked, and totally useless for the purposes of merchandize. Upon this, we flatly refused to receive them, or to pay the money — a denial which we expected would immediately lead to acts of violence; but the Mingrelian was too intent upon his object to be easily disconcerted, and he desired us to wait for a short time when he would return with that which would satisfy us.

“ We waited accordingly whilst our wretched victims lay groaning under the trees, and in the course of a short time, had the pleasure to see him return accompanied by a woman. “ Here,” he said, “ this will complete our bargain, you can have no hesitation now to give me the money.” We inspected the woman and found her to be really handsome, notwithstanding the state of excitement, anger and misery in which she was plunged, vociferating execrations with all the fury of a mad woman at her abductor, and imploring our compassion, entreating us not to tear her away from her children,

family and country. However, pity did not belong to our profession, and, therefore, without heeding her, we added her to the other twelve, and the money was forthwith paid.

“The truth of the story was as follows : —The Mingrelian having found great difficulty in completing the requisite number of slaves, had resorted to the expedient of inviting twelve priests to his house under the pretext of making them officiate on a saint’s day, which having done, he gave them an entertainment, where he made them drunk, and disposed of them as already related. By means of his servants, he conveyed them to us, but when he found us determined not to receive them, immediately returned to his house, and through some false pretext, enticing his wife to follow him, forthwith delivered her to us, as a make-weight to his deficiency.

“In cool blood we might have been struck by the extreme abomination of his conduct, but the hearts of my companions were perfectly hardened ; and mine, through weakness of character, and force of example,

was hardened also. I would fain have helped her, but what could I do?

“It was on this occasion,” continued Ali Murad, “that I had the misfortune to lose my thumb. I was appointed to take charge of one of the prisoners, a stout priest, who at first behaved himself with exemplary resignation, when, to my horror, as I clutched his long beard, the better to bind his person, he seized upon my thumb with his teeth, and biting it with the ferocity of a dog, retained his hold until he had nearly bitten through the bone. No blows could destroy the tenacity of his jaws, and he kept grinding with unruffled composure, until, at length, the sharp blade of a dagger, thrust into his mouth, forced him to loose his hold.

“He, however, had succeeded in depriving me of the use of my thumb for ever, for one of our party was obliged to cut it off for me, and stopt the flow of blood by plunging the stump into boiling oil. After undergoing a long probation of pain, at length it healed, and I was once again restored to the duties of my profession.

I proceeded in it step by step until I became as hard-hearted as the rest, and having realized some money, stole on my own account, occasionally securing a child for private speculation, until I could manage to make ventures in maids and wives.

“After a time, I quitted the stealing department and became a dealer. The fraud which I lately practised in enticing this old man’s daughter from his roof in Ardebil, is now before you, and I throw myself upon your majesty’s mercy. I have concealed nothing—I acknowledge my fault—place me in any situation in which I can show zeal for your majesty’s service, and you will find in Ali Murad one who will prove what intelligence, activity and fidelity can accomplish ;—but, should your majesty deem me worthy of punishment, here is my neck and here are my feet—your humble slave submits, without a murmur, to whatever may be awarded to him.”

The Shah had listened with much attention to Ali Murad’s narrative, and although he was incensed at the cruelties he had committed as a man-stealer, yet he was diverted by

his adventures as a dervish, and softened by the fearless manner with which he had spoken the truth.

Having sat and cogitated for some time, the assembled group standing before him in silent expectation of the judgment he was about to pass, his majesty at length opened his lips and said, addressing himself to the old Mollah of Ardebil:

“Come forward, old man, your fortune is on the rise; you have recovered possession of your daughter, and you have seen the King; thank Allah for this. You shall also enjoy full benefit of the law of our sacred prophet, (upon whom be blessings!) and shall overcome your enemy. Here, Cottonwool!” addressing himself to the jester, “go, take the ear of that burnt father (pointing to Ali Murad) in your hands, place it in the hand of that injured true believer. Now, old man, do with the offender what seemeth best to you; the Shah has said it.”

The Shah's decree was immediately carried into execution. The man-stealer was marched away slave of the man he had injured, and the city was made to



ring of the equity of the Shah's judgment.

We will not stop to inquire what became of Ali Murad, but this we must say, that the Mollah's beautiful daughter became one of the principal favourites of the royal harem, and reigned supreme in the affections of the enamoured Shah. Her influence was so great, that she was said to carry about the Shah's beard in her hand, and it very soon evinced itself by an event which became the talk and astonishment of the whole city.

The old and infirm Cazi, in consequence of the fright and excitement produced by the treatment which he had received on the day of the great feast, fell sick, and not long after the scene just described, died.

To the astonishment of every one, and to the disgust of the whole body of the Ulemah, the Mollah of Ardebil was appointed to be Cazi in his stead.

"Who is this?" said one man of the law, staggering under the weight of his turban, "who comes here and takes his place over all our heads? over mine which carries about more

law in the tip of one of the hairs of its beard, than he, his grand-father, his great grand-father, or all his ancestry ever did in their whole persons !”

“ May his house be ruined,” exclaimed a second. “ Cazi, indeed, there is that for such a Cazi,” throwing his five fingers into the air. “ There is not a cur in the bazaar, that will not come and laugh at his beard as he sits in his place at the four waters\*.”

“ Where have we got to now ?” asked a third, “ that a cow from Ardebil, who has done nothing all his life but sit upon his carpet, and wag his head to and fro near the sheik’s tomb, should come and administer justice at the King’s gate, to the people of the imperial city.”

To all these questions and remarks, there was only one answer to make, which was, he is the father of the beautiful Dilferib. The poor old Mollah who was, indeed, little fitted, either

\* *Chakar sé* or Four Waters is a conspicuous spot in an Eastern bazaar, where four canals of running water usually congregate, where the Cazi sits to administer justice.

by character or attainments, to fill the important situation of Cazi in solarge and populous a city as Ispahan, although highly flattered at the distinction conferred upon him, became very much perplexed whenever a question of any difficulty was brought before him to decide. At his first appointment, he did nothing but exclaim, "Allah! there is but one Allah!" at the greatness of his good fortune, and, seeing that all things prospered, he concluded that the same good luck would favour him in his future career.

He had tried many causes, and by the help of destiny, had managed to pronounce tolerably good judgments, but one day there came before him a case, which so completely puzzled him, that he was fain to cry "Aman! Aman! Pity! oh pity." It was as follows.

---

#### THE STORY OF BABADUL, AND A VENDER OF SWEETMEATS.

A muleteer of the name of Babadul, was wont to make journies into the most distant

parts of Persia, and even into Turkey and Arabia, according as he found the best price for the hire of his cattle.

His principal possession was a fine string of mules, the pride of the caravans, to which he added a very handsome, though silly, wife, who remained at home during his absence. He was a good man, worked hard, and had acquired so much celebrity for honest dealing, that his beasts never remained idle to eat unprofitable corn and straw, and the consequence was, that he had amassed a large sum of money.

Although honest, yet he was occasionally warm in his temper and addicted to anger, by which means he made enemies of those who would not overlook affronts in favour of his real worth.

There lived in his neighbourhood, a *hawaji*, a vender of coarse sweetmeats, which he hawked about the town for sale. His name was Sari Mehmet, or Yellow Mahommed, so called because his beard was said to be of the same colour as his ware, and this man often excited Babadul's wrath, because he

possessed the art of teasing in an eminent degree, and would, at the most inconvenient moments, when the mule driver was preparing his mules for a journey, assorting the packages to the strength of each animal, and mending his tackle, hover about him and cry out, "*halwa! halwa!*" with the most pertinacious obstinacy, although he saw no one who wanted sweetmeats, and was aware that his absence would be much more agreeable than his presence.

It was early in the morning when Babadul was busy preparing his mules for a long journey into Khorassan, that Sari Mehmet appeared crying out *halwa* as usual, with the utmost vehemence, and took his post at the corner of the open space where the mules and packages were collected, breaking the stillness of the morning by his eternal cry. The muleteer, vexed at finding that one of his best mules had fallen lame, and perplexed what to do, (for the caravan was then collecting at the city gate,) was so much annoyed by the ill-timed intrusion of the halwaji, that losing all patience, he exclaimed, "In the name of Allah, why do you stand there

braying like an ass ; don't you see that we are all mules and mule drivers here, and that we want none of your sweetmeats. You have dried up my liver, with your noise !”

“ *Behkeh* !” exclaimed Sari Mehmet, “ what words are these ? if you do not eat halwa, others do ; why am I a *halwaji* ?”

Upon which he cried sweetmeats with redoubled vigour. Babadul's rage rose in proportion as the other's power of annoyance increased, until at length, unable to contain himself longer, he took up a staff that was at hand and threw it so exactly to the mark, that it struck the offender on the head and overthrew the large wooden platter, containing his sweetmeats, on the ground.

“ Curses on your throat !” exclaimed Babadul.

“ Well done !” exclaimed his man.

“ I'll burn your father for this !” roared the sweetmeat-man. “ I'll destroy your house, oh you man without a saint.”

“ Go to Jehanum,” exclaimed Babadul ; and thus the war raged in words, until the one departed with his mules, and the other had gathered together his scattered sweetmeats.

It was not until two years after this event, that Babadul returned home: upon his departure, he had confided as usual his money, the whole amount of his savings and industry to his wife, which she put away, sealed up in a leathern bag, into a place of safety; but she was too foolish to keep her own counsel, and it was well known in the world that Babadul was rich.

On reaching his house he found his wife, but not his money, and it was in order to recover it, that he now applied to the proper authorities. He had learnt the manner in which the loss had occurred, and when he appeared before the Cazi, stated his case in the following words :

“ Your slave begs leave to state, that when last he set off for Khorassan, he left five hundred tomans in gold, and one hundred and fifty silver abassis in a bag, to the care of his wife;—perhaps your slave did right, perhaps he did wrong;—she is a weak one; and her sense is small, but what can be done in opposition to fate? Some twelve months after your slave had left his home, the poor weak one heard a strange cry in the streets; it was the voice of Sari Mehmet, the sweetmeat seller—but instead of

crying out *halwa!* like a good Mussulman, what did he cry, but “Babadul is dead!” to this the weak one will swear. During many days when he passed the house, he cried, *Babadul murdeh! Babadul murdeh!* instead of *halwa, khoob halwa*, as he was wont to do. What can your slave say more?—This burnt father was evidently in league with another burnt father, and before a second month was over, they persuaded the weak one that your slave was dead, and she agreed to marry the rascal in league with the sweetmeat seller. He very soon found out where my money was secreted, and, having got possession of it, did not insist upon marriage, but took his departure, and left us both without a cap to our heads. This is my story; your slave requires justice at the hands of Sari Mehmet who is the origin of all this mischief. What more can I say?”

The Cazi as usual ordered Sari Mehmet to appear, and inquired what he had to say in his defence. The sweetmeat seller, who was a voluble speaker, appeared supported by several witnesses, and very soon puzzled the Cazi by a multiplicity of words. He stoutly denied



having uttered any false cry, announcing the death of his opponent, and hinted that it was evident the woman was wishing the occurrence of such an event, when she could mistake his well known cry of *halwa khoob halwa*, for *Babadul murdeh*. Besides, he argued, what had his cry to do with the loss of the muleteer's money? if she were foolish enough to tell another where the money was concealed what had he to do with it? He swore, and protested his innocence, called so many witnesses to prove that he had never uttered any other cry, than his usual one, and so confused the brains of the Cazi, that in despair, the latter deferred giving judgment, until he should have conferred with his friend the Brother Cottonwool to whom he always had recourse in cases of emergency. The Kaka, when he heard his statement, immediately settled it in his own mind, that the story would afford amusement to his royal master and straightway he made it known to him.

Now the monarch being, according to the Mahomedan law the last tribunal of appeal, Shah Abbas determined to hear the cause himself, and forthwith ordered the parties to appear.

They were introduced by the Kaka and the Cazi, and stood without, near the brink of the marble basin, in fear and trembling.

“Where is your wife?” said the Shah to Babadul, “she is the principal witness;—have you examined her?” said he to the Cazi.

The Cazi said he had not, because her husband had acted for her. As soon as she appeared, the Shah said, “Now, good woman, what witness have you that Sari Mehmet, instead of his usual cry, said “*Babadul murdeh*,” did anybody hear him besides yourself?”

“If the cat could speak,” said the woman, “she would bear witness; but no other living thing that I know of.”

“Think again,” said the Shah, “much depends upon your words.”

“Oh!” said the woman, as if awaking from a dream, “O yes, yes, there is our neighbour, who lives opposite to us, and his wife keeps a parrot, and the parrot is daily saying *Babadul murdeh*!” •

“Ah is it so,” said the Shah, “bring hither the parrot.”

As soon as the parrot appeared, the Shah ordered Sari Mehmet to make his usual cry, when, to the astonishment of every one present, the bird exclaimed, “ *Babadul murdeh !*”

“ You cannot have a better witness than that,” exclaimed the Shah ; “ he will speak the truth, when every one else will lie ; we cannot be deceived here.” Then addressing the culprit, he said, “ If man were to check the first impulse of evil in his thoughts there would be no crime ; the origin of Babadul’s loss was your acting upon a malicious intent ; had you restrained yourself, no mischief would have accrued ; as it is, your punishment is inevitable.”

Upon that he was ordered a proportionate bastinado on the soles of his feet, and was delivered over to his opponent, who exhibited such generosity of conduct, that the Shah, in admiration of his liberality, and in consideration of his general good conduct appointed him his muleteer-in-chief, with well understood opportunities to enrich himself by certain perquisites of office.

---

As soon as my friend had ceased to speak, I did not fail to make my acknowledgments with as many *mashallahs* and *barikallahs* as he could desire.

“ Did I say well or ill ?” he inquired with great earnestness.

Again I exclaimed “ *mashallah*,” and he seemed satisfied. “ But,” said I, “ can you venture to talk of Kings to your Shah, in the manner you have done to me ? the opinion I have formed of your Shah is this, that unless his subjects continually tickle his ear, he has an ugly propensity to tickle their feet ; how is this ?”

“ As Allah is true,” answered the poet, “ you do not say ill—but give ear—Kings like to hear of other Kings, it is a theme of which they are never tired, provided, directly or indirectly, you make them feel that the comparison is all in their own favour ; do not believe that when I related this story to His Majesty, I used the same terms to him that I have to you. *Astafarallah !* heaven forbid ! I am not so entirely an ass as that. I did not fail to make him understand it was taken for granted, that Shah Abbas was less than a dog when compared

to himself; that the race of Sefi were so many unclean beasts compared to the Kajars; that the ark\* of Tehran was a paradise, whilst the Palace of forty pillars at Ispahan was a stable; and, in short, that Persia, at the present day—although,” added he, “I need not say how falsely I spoke—is a nation more flourishing than any nation in Asia, when brought into competition with Persia in the time of the Sefies.”

“But,” said I, “I expected that you would have adopted romance in your narrative instead of history and matter of fact; much may be inculcated through the insinuations of fiction, which cannot be openly spoken. In your present style of story, you must keep to probabilities, and be consistent with something like truth, whereas when you bring fable and fabulous personages to your aid, you can allow imagination to run wild, and may make a story extend from Ispahan to the furthestmost Hind.”

“You have not decided ill,” remarked the Mirza, “and so I do on ordinary occasions, when the road is long, and my wits are not very bright; but in this story, I had an object

\* The Shah's palace is called *Ark*.

in view. We have remarked at court, and it is quite agreed among the viziers and courtiers of the King's gate, that the Shah has taken too serious a turn—the Mollahs have too much influence;—long faces, large turbans, and cross breasted coats have given a tinge of false sanctity to the Shah and the princes which is beginning to oppress the nation. The natural Persian is a lively animal, and we begin to feel that the national character is altering for the worse, therefore I devised this story—I wished to insinuate how much good a little mirth would do, and, perhaps, bring buffoons and merry andrews into fashion.”

“ And how did His Majesty approve of your story ?” said I.

“ By your soul,” said the Mirza, “ he fainted with delight ; he sent me a partridge next day, which he had killed with his own fortunate hand.”

“ What did he say to the man-stealer—do such things exist now ?”

“ In the days of Shah Abbas,” said my friend, “ such was the case ; since these bankrupt Russians have taken possession of the countries of the Caucasus, slaves are not so

plentiful; it is only in time of war that the markets are well furnished—Persia is out of patience for want of slaves.”

Thus did we converse, until I rose to take my leave, exacting at the same time from him a promise, that this visit should be succeeded by others when he would narrate to me such stories as he either might have communicated to the King, or have prepared for the purpose of communicating. To this he freely consented, for I had touched his vanity, and I already could perceive, curling up at the corner of his mouth, and in the expansion of his twinkling eyes, symptoms of that prolific invention, parent of the following family of stories.

In order to adapt the foregoing tale to the taste of European readers, I have weeded it of the very lengthy details, and never ending digressions in which my friend indulged. I have also suppressed the whole of the poetry, and opposed myself to that abundance of epithets, which are ever to be found in Oriental writing. I think I have entered sufficiently into the spirit of his narrative to give a tolerable idea of his manner. Had the

Arabian Nights' Entertainments, with all their singular fertility of invention and never ending variety, appeared as a new book in the present day, translated literally, and not adapted to European taste in the manner attempted in M. Galland's translation, I doubt whether they would have been tolerated, certainly not read with the avidity they are, even in the dress with which he has clothed them, however imperfect that dress may be. Still, so capricious is public taste, that the stories here presented to the public may, perhaps, be considered as too much divested of ornament, and not sufficiently abundant in repetition and orientality. Would that it were possible to infuse into our language the happy peculiarities of oriental expressions; then indeed a greater deviation from received idioms might have been indulged in, but, as it is, I have endeavoured to confine myself to a task which may seem easy, but is often most difficult, namely the making oneself intelligible, and if in so doing, I have superadded amusement, I shall esteem myself to have achieved a work of no little importance.



## VISIT II.

In the middle of the summer when business induced our embassy to visit the Shah in his palace, on the plains of Ojan, I again had the pleasure of seeing my friend the Mirza. I immediately called upon him in his tent, and he received me with open arms.

“ You are welcome,” he exclaimed as soon as he saw me, “ your place has long been empty. I have things to say to you.”

He then entered upon a narrative of his own doings since last we had met; he informed me that on the second night after the King's departure from Tehran, the weather being very sultry, he was suddenly called upon to the King's stirrup; he added that he was extremely sleepy at the time, and that his eyes were scarcely opened ere the Shah ordered him to relate a story. The suddenness of the call was such, that it entirely put out of his head a story which he had invented

in the morning, and, "By your soul," said he, "I was so surprised that my heart came into my mouth with fear; but putting as good a face upon it as I was able, I said to the Shah, "I am your sacrifice, and upon my eyes be it!" Upon which I began, in the usual way, to describe a King who only wanted a son to make him happy and—would you believe it?—my luck was so great, that I related one of the best stories ever invented, and for which the Shah said, 'Barikallah!' and when he had reached his tent, ordered that a dish of rice which had been served up to his own table should be sent to me. I will relate it," he said; upon which, calling for our kalians and placing ourselves in proper attitudes, he began as follows.

---

#### STORY OF HEZZAR MUSHKIL, PRINCE OF BUKHARA.

In ancient times, there was a kingdom of great power and extent in Bukhara, bordering

both upon China and Persia, which was governed by a monarch, who possessed every thing that could make him happy. The country he reigned over was situated in an agreeable climate, neither oppressed by overpowering heats in summer, nor chilled by relentless cold in winter.

It abounded in the choicest fruits, its soil yielded abundantly to the cultivator, and famine had never reared its squalid front among its inhabitants. The people were contented to live under the monarch's lenient rule, and he was at peace with his neighbours. He enjoyed the advantage of possessing a wise vizier, whose experience was fostered by sage councillors, and he was not deficient in well-trying generals, and in bodies of valiant soldiers. There was only one thing wanting to complete his happiness, and that was a son—he had no male heir to his throne. In vain he ordered prayers to be put up at the mosques—in vain he commanded his holy men to fast—in vain he fasted himself, and imposed several mortifications upon himself and his court, his wishes were never granted, for his

wives only brought forth daughters. Not a year, scarcely a month, passed, that in despair he did not take to himself a new wife, and still daughters were born to him; he sent discreet emissaries throughout all parts of his kingdom to discover the families whose daughters might be famous for the procreation of the male species, but still when such were sent to him, his evil destiny only added to his female stock. His daughters, in the meanwhile, were growing up to be a formidable body in the state, although, according to prescribed rules, they did not appear in public, but were strictly confined to the harem.

Still there were not wanting busy bodies and agitators, who made them believe that as it was evidently the intention of inevitable destiny to deprive the kingdom of a male heir, so it was plain that, in accordance with the customs of other countries, females were henceforth to fill that post.

In consequence of the spreading of such a doctrine, the harem became the seat of the most extravagant expectations, and the Shah

became daily more and more anxious to set the question at rest by the birth of a son. At length, in utter despair, he determined to make a pilgrimage to a holy man, who lived upon one of the highest pinnacles of the mountain Alborj, and who was said to know all things, being enabled by his science to make even destiny occasionally bend to his desire.

To effect this, the Shah had recourse to his own astrologers, who, having consulted the stars, announced, with terror in their looks, that throughout the whole range of their observations they could not discover any conjunction of the planets favourable to such an undertaking.

The King, who was seldom angry, upon this occasion grew violent with rage, and declared that he would first discard his own wise men, and then go to a neighbouring kingdom, and there seek the aid of other astrologers who would, he made no doubt, afford him the information he wanted. Having set his mind upon this expedition, he ordered the ceremonial thereof as follows :

Every one was enjoined to array himself in mourning, wearing the coarsest clothes, abstaining from dyeing either beard, eye-brows or nails, but to make use of a dark-coloured turban. No one was to smoke tobacco or to drink wine ; and the bitterest coffee was to be generally administered.

As the procession made its way, the heralds, appointed for the purpose, were, at stated intervals, to stoop down to the earth, and gathering up dust throw it into the air, crying *Hak, Hak, Hak*, dust ! dust ! dust !

The day before they reached the holy man, everybody was to make a rent in the seam of his garment at least two spans long, and this was not to be sown up again until it should be known whether or not the Shah's petition for a son had been heard. With these and such like regulations, the procession was ordered on a certain day to hold itself in readiness to depart, the King in the meanwhile, preparing himself by constant prayer, unceasing ablutions, and great abstinence from everything agreeable.

The exit from the city was through a long street, at the extremity of which stood a bridge. Near this bridge in a miserable den, barely weather proof, lived a wretched being, a woman, with scarcely a rag to cover her nakedness, whose history was a mystery, and who had resided there for many years. There was a degree of masculine fierceness in her aspect, which rendered her the terror of timid persons, and an object of curiosity to others.

She would associate with no one; her food was of the coarsest kind, often of carrion, and she was so proud that she never would accept of anything better, unless driven to the greatest straits.

The principal peculiarity in her person was the want of the right breast, which appeared to have been crushed or seared off: but this she was careful to keep concealed from the public gaze. She was usually called the Mad One, but those who pretended to be well acquainted with her history whispered that she was a Hemezen, one of that strange nation composed entirely of women.

On the day of the Shah's departure, it was remarked that she appeared more than usually excited, having taken post upon the roof of her miserable cot—her eyes constantly turned in the direction of the city gate.

As soon as she perceived the head of the procession appear, arming herself with a long staff, and contrary to her custom, she bared her right breast, whilst at the same time disposing of her tattered garments in folds over her person, she stood in a prominent attitude, her long black hair streaming in the wind. She waited with apparent impatience, muttering to herself, until the Shah himself appeared, when suddenly with aloud voice, to the astonishment of all present, she broke out into the following words :

“ Stop oh King ! whither art thou going ? art thou mad to go thus, seeking a son from an old man. Come to me and I will tell thee whither to go ;—go to the country of women, go where man is hated and proscribed—there thou wilt find one who will give thee a son—curses will



fall upon thy country shouldst thou not heed my words !”

These words rung upon the ears of the Shah, his vizier and his courtiers, as the warnings of fate. Every one, their faces uplifted, eyed the extraordinary being before them with looks of astonishment. The procession paused—the King himself, who had set off with a heart broken by ill-boding and apprehension, unsupported by his astrologers, and uncheered by good omens, and who, moreover, had felt his horse stumble at the threshold of the city gate, paused uncertain what to do—whether to return or to proceed.

His grand vizier, who never had been the advocate of the present undertaking, on perceiving the indecision of his royal master, approached him with every demonstration of the greatest respect, and first touching the ground with his hand, lifted it to his head and said :

“ I am your sacrifice—oh Centre of the Universe ! this mad woman’s words are wonderful words !—may the King live for ever !—perhaps

wisdom may come from insanity; and light shine from darkness, and if so, why should we not court destiny after this manner, rather than by the dangers of a long journey."

"True you have said," answered the King, "let us return—order the woman to our private hall of audience, and whatever shall be, so be it."

Upon this the whole procession returned whence it came, whilst the woman was straightway mounted upon a horse, and so conducted to the royal palace.

Having been brought before the King, she was closely questioned, and her answers having excited much curiosity, she was commanded to recite her whole story, which with much mildness of look but with an air of independence she did as follows.

---

#### STORY OF A HEMEZEN OR AMAZON.

"What would you know from a poor outcast like me? what can I say, but that I am become mad from excess of misery—still, such

as I am, your country has protected me. I have eaten its salt, and of such advantages I must not be unmindful, therefore whatever return I can make, upon my head and eyes be it! Give ear to me, oh Shah! for, wretched as I am, I may lead you to know things of which you are ignorant, and which may change your destinies and that of your whole race.

“I am a Hemezen;—every one knows that we profess to be man-haters; in our country no male is allowed to reside. My mother was one of our chiefs, and only consented to bring a child into the world from a sense of public duty. Who my father was I know not, nor does it much signify, for he was driven from among us at the appointed time, according to the laws of our community. I grew up one of the straightest and strongest of my sex, and, although what is called beauty is despised among us as unworthy the ambition of a rational being, still I was not ignorant that I was handsome. As I approached to womanhood, steps were taken to fit me for becoming a warrior, and, being robust, it was ordained that

I should wield the spear and the bow, in preference to the shield ; in consequence my right breast was withered ; I was taught to perform all the exercises ; before I was fifteen, I could manage the wildest horse, hit the smallest mark with an arrow, and had learnt the art of throwing the noose, nor was it long before my courage was brought to the test. Our nation was at war with a band of mountaineers—men who had ventured to profane our territory with their presence ;—we attacked them, and conquered ;—we drove the miscreants from before us, and, let me say the truth, I proved myself a true Hemezen—but for the misery of my future life, it was my destiny to wound one youth in so desperate a manner, that he fell a prisoner into our hands. He would have been slain on the spot had I not interfered ; he was fatally handsome, and alas ! after all I am but a woman. He was taken to my maternal home, and there tended with care, but, need I say it ? I committed the crime of loving him ; a mutual affection grew up between us, and when he was well enough to

take his departure, I could not bear the thought of seeing him leave us, I yielded to his persuasions and followed him. Oh me! need I say how much I have since deplored such a step; he proved totally unworthy of my love.

“After wandering some time with him in the Persian dominions, we took up our residence in one of the great towns, where I soon discovered that his love had ceased to exist—ceased did I say? he superadded the atrocity of the basest ingratitude, for I found that no longer loving me as his wife, he had determined to sell me as his slave.

“But little did he know what a Hemezen can do when her anger is once roused; I determined to flee by myself, and to seek refuge and a livelihood in some distant country; but in so doing, I resolved first to be revenged—the traitor learnt but too late the difference between a woman’s love and a woman’s hate, and, having left him to seek what burial he might from the hand of the stranger, I fled hitherwards.

“For days and nights I wandered over

and mountains and pathless deserts, subsisting upon the food prepared by Providence for the wild beasts of the field; at length my steps brought me, oh King! to the foot of your throne, and here I have subsisted, like an outcast as I am, upon the charity of your subjects. Shall I not then return such benefits in the best way I am able?—Give ear then! I will proceed to mine own country; you shall send me thither with honour—I will procure for you a maiden from our tribe who shall give you a son, for the Hemezens rarely ever give birth to daughters; he will be your heir, the perplexities which surround your kingdom shall be at an end, and, Inshallah! the poor wretch who has so long been a suppliant at your gate, will shew her gratitude.”

Upon hearing these words, which produced a considerable effect upon all present, the King looked to his grand vizier, who being celebrated for his wisdom, was expected to discover whether the proposal made by the Hemezen was founded upon deceit or truth.

His majesty was evidently bent upon closing at once with the strange female's proposal, and despatching her forthwith upon her em-

bassy, but, being accustomed to repose upon his minister's foresight and prudence, he addressed the latter as follows :—

“ We are willing to be guided by your advice on this occasion, but, as Allah is great, decide what is to be done, for the King is impatient of delay.”

Upon this the vizier answered: “ Your humble slave is your sacrifice, and only requires a few minutes to question the woman before he decides.”

Upon which, with the King's permission, he retired into another apartment, and there having questioned her upon what appeared doubtful, and her answers proving satisfactory, he straightway returned to his royal master and informed him, he was of opinion that the expedition should take place immediately.

Upon this there ensued a great commotion throughout the court; preparations for a long journey were ordered, fit persons to accompany the woman were appointed, letters were written, firmans issued and sealed, presents prepared, and a lucky day and hour were secured by the astrologers, for the commencement of this new undertaking.

It was not long ere the embassy was on its road, and, in order to give it importance, the grand vizier sent his son to direct its operations, and moreover issued instructions how he was to act, in case the woman should prove false.

She, having been duly furnished with clothes, (though not with a veil, for the Hemezens do not cover their faces like Mahomedan women,) was mounted upon a handsome horse, which she managed with great dexterity, and graced the procession by the native dignity of her manner.

Prayers were put up in all the mosques for the success of the embassy, and it was announced, for the consolation of the royal mind, that nothing could be more fortunate than the moment when the King's letter of credentials passed over the threshold of the city gate.

In the meanwhile this event had produced no small sensation among the King's daughters in the harem. They declared themselves ill-used because the Shah, their father, would not abide by the decrees of fate, but was determined still to expect a son; and these complaints were made with so little reserve that they could not fail being repeated to him.



The good King again had recourse to his grand vizier's counsels, who advised that husbands should be provided for all who were of a marriageable age without delay, and to this effect messages were sent to the various princes and governors of provinces, of whom there were many tributary to the state of Bukhara, announcing the honour conferred upon them, and that they each forthwith should make preparations for receiving a King's daughter for a wife. This was agreeable news to the ladies, whatever it might be to the princes and governors, for, weary of their lives in the harem, they longed for more liberty, a privilege they were more likely to enjoy as wives than as unmarried women. But this change in their circumstances did not produce any in their feelings concerning the succession to the throne, and, as fast as they married, their first care was to influence their husband's minds to take part against their father in his new arrangements for the acquisition of a male heir.

The King grew impatient for the return of his embassy, for the time had now elapsed

when it might appear. He felt that his hopes of more offspring diminished at the close of each revolving year, and consequently he was more and more impatient to witness the result of this last attempt for realizing his wishes. At length, one fine spring day, a messenger was seen to pass in haste through the city gates, and, making his way to the palace, having alighted from his horse was taken before the King, boots on his feet and whip in hand, and there he announced, that the returning embassy was only a day's march from the city, and was conducting with it a most beautiful princess, niece of the Queen of the Hemezens, as a wife to the King. He was instantly invested with a dress of honour, and the news was soon spread throughout the city, giving great joy to those who were really well-wishers to the state, but clouding the brows of all who were satisfied with things as they were, and particularly those of the ladies in the harem.

A deputation on the grandest scale was ordered to be in readiness to issue from the city on the next morning—to proceed to meet the new Queen and conduct her with all honour

and magnificence to the arms of the expectant King. But here a difficulty presented itself, for his Majesty having ordered his principal daughters and their mothers to issue forth on this errand, they in their ill humour, peremptorily refused to go. No entreaties could prevail upon them to accede to the Shah's wishes, and consequently in opposition to his usual lenity, he was obliged to use coercion, and to order a bastinado on the soles of the feet to be administered to the most refractory, which proved of considerable use in persuading the remainder to attend.

The whole city turned out to witness the arrival of the new Queen, and truly it was a sight novel to the inhabitants, for she appeared unveiled, according to the fashion of her country, mounted upon a superb horse, though but meanly caparisoned. A bow and quiver full of arrows were slung at her back, she carried a small spear in her hand, a shield was on her arm, and her head was adorned by a small iron helmet, inlaid with gold, which fitted tightly to her head, and from which streamed a peacock's feather. She was young, though a masculine beauty, formed

Like a wrestler, with eyes darting determination, and with a self-possessed carriage and demeanour, totally unlike the soft and effeminate beings who live shut up in harems, and whose faces are never permitted to meet the eye of man. At her side rode the elder Hemezen beaming with delight at the success of her embassy, and behind her followed several others, armed to the teeth, and declaring their prowess and contempt of mankind by their bold looks and independent carriage. The young Queen eyed the multitude around with apparent indifference, as if she would have said, I am doing you all great honour in condescending to come on such an errand as this; but these looks were greeted by all as the promise of the future prince, whom she was to give them for their future sovereign.

The Shah himself in a magnificent tent, pitched a parasang distant from the city, received her in person, and it need not be said how overjoyed he was to possess so precious a Queen. He displayed the utmost magnificence of his court to welcome her. The tent, which was supported by fifty gilded columns, was resplendent with mirrors and painted panels; the

walls, composed of rich stuffs, were embroidered in open lattice work; the finest carpets were spread on terraces formed for the occasion, and the softest cushions placed in convenient positions to recline against; fountains threw up refreshing streams in front, whilst the softest and most costly perfumes embalmed the air. Out of compliment to the customs of the Hemezens, the Shah did not receive his Queen with a long train of women, but required the presence of his principal warriors, who, clad in their most resplendent armour, made a line for her to walk through as she alighted from her horse. At this she seemed much pleased, and when at length she reached the King, who rose from his seat to receive her, she paused not to take off her boots, but equipped in her travelling dress, with her arms, her bow and arrows suspended to her back, pressed forward and made him an obeisance after the fashion of her own country.

To this flattering reception, succeeded entertainments of the most costly nature, during which the riches of the empire were exhibited, and in which were displayed all sorts of pas-

times that could give pleasure to the people as well as to the court. The only dissatisfied individuals were the ladies of the royal harem, who, since this influx of masculine females, appeared to sink into insignificance ; but revenge was brooding in their hearts, and they only awaited the opportunity to indulge it.

As months rolled on, the expectations of the Shah and his people, to the universal joy and delight, were declared about to be realized ; the young Queen promised to make good their hopes. Every expedient that could be devised to render Heaven propitious was resorted to, and the good Shah already began to replenish his coffers in the hope that in due time he should be called upon to make such universal rejoicings throughout the kingdom, as would make his people drunk with happiness. The day at length arrived, the whole Ulemah were required to fast and pray, every doctor and midwife in the country was brought into requisition, and it was generally supposed that if, after all, a daughter were to ensue, the King's wrath would be so inflamed that he would first kill all his daughters with their mothers, and then go and hide his head in a distant

pilgrimage for the rest of his days;—but it was not so ordained. To the joy of the nation, a son was born; the King put no bounds to his delight, a general thanksgiving was ordered in the mosques, the shops were shut and decorated with boughs, the whole of the population put on new clothes and perambulated the streets, saying nothing but “Mobarek,” and wherever people were inclined, they got drunk with wine without any fear of the priests. No pen can describe the festivities at court. The royal treasures were emptied in paying for the extravagant joy of the King, who daily devised some new mode of expressing his satisfaction. One of the persons principally singled out for the royal munificence, was the original Hemenzen, she the real cause of this prosperity. The miserable hut which she had so long occupied, was now converted into a magnificent palace, and she was so gifted by the King, that she was enabled to live there in honour and dignity during the rest of her days.

The new born prince became the theme of every tongue; he was announced to be the finest child that had ever been seen, and, strange to relate, there was a small bow and

arrow stamped on his left breast, which, so the wise men assured the King, proclaimed that he would become a man of great prowess; wise women and grey heads said that the marks denoted the character of the mother, who was dreaming of her own country and pursuits, when she ought to have been thinking of her child. By name he was called Hezzar Mushkil, or The Thousand Difficulties, to make him remember through life the anxiety which had attended his birth, and, on the day of his being named, his mother insisted that he should sleep near her own favourite horse, his head resting on a sword, in order thereby to infuse into his nature the love of arms and horsemanship—the two things most prized by the Hemezens.

As soon as he was weaned, in accordance with the agreement or treaty made with the Queen of the Hemezens, the mother of the royal babe returned to her own country, loaded with the gratitude and the presents of the Shah and his people for having so well fulfilled her part of the contract, whilst she confided the care of her son to her countrywoman, the ambassadress who agreed to remain and bring him up, enjoying the title and privileges of Dedeh, or nurse, besides



the distinction of being the acknowledged benefactress of the state of Bukhara. She entered upon the performance of her duties with determined zeal and watchfulness, for she was aware of the enemies which the child possessed in the harem. She never allowed any food to pass its lips, until it had first past through her own, nor ever laid herself down to rest until she was assured that no harm could accrue to her charge during the night.

In the meanwhile, although the King was in a state of utter enchantment at the possession of a son, still his existence was much embittered by the conduct of his daughters and their ambitious mothers. Rumours of disaffection in the provinces began to be spread abroad, and it was not disguised that such feelings originated in insidious measures adopted by his sons-in-law and their wives. The grand vizier, who was ever watchful over the interests of his master, continued to marry off the daughters as fast as he found husbands, for he dreaded the existence of domestic enemies which might endanger the safety of the child; but his sagacity was at fault when he heard of the state of

the provinces. He made a display of the royal armies by calling them together in the summer, and causing the King to take journeys through the disaffected parts; but well he knew that no enmity, when once roused, was equal to that which exists between blood relations. He did his best to remove such animosities, whilst he was careful to take hostages for the good behaviour of persons under suspicion, wherever he could do so with advantage.

Whilst the affairs of the kingdom were thus administered, the Prince Hezzar Mushkil was daily growing up in strength and comeliness. Everything in him announced a remarkable character; all his pursuits had a manly tendency, his games were miniature pictures of war; he begun early to shew great skill in the exercises of the body, and as soon as his little legs could bestride a horse's body, he was seen clinging on with undaunted courage.

Under the direction of his nurse, he learnt whatever a Hemezen could teach him, and, in addition to his own manliness of nature, appeared to imbibe all the energy of her national character. He had never been

permitted to enter the walls of the royal harem, therefore he was totally ignorant of the effeminate manners of its inhabitants, nor did he know one of his sisters by sight, so much had the family feuds influenced all his earliest habits.

The King's daughters, married and single, together with their mothers and husbands, finding how entirely they had sunk into insignificance since the existence of this son, were burning with impatience for an opportunity of exhibiting their anger. The governor of the town of Bikend, who had married one of the said daughters, was a proud and haughty man ; he was robust in person and had been successful in the field. His wife had so worked upon his feelings that he chose to consider himself ill-used, and he, acting upon his brothers-in-law, who were acted upon by their wives, became, in time, the chief of a disaffected league, all bent on the destruction of their hereditary prince, and future monarch. The King who was now advancing in age, spent his days in the peaceable enjoyment of his power, and, secure in the possession of an heir, became negligent of the affairs of the state.

By the time Hezzar Mushkil had attained the age of seventeen years, the whole of the provinces, with a few exceptions, were ripe for revolt, a state of things which the grand vizier, with all his sagacity, had not been able to suppress. At length, after much difficulty, the King having been made sensible of the necessity of vigour and action, consented to bring the principal offender to justice, and ordered the governor of Bikend to the foot of his throne to give an account of his proceedings; this was the signal for revolt, and, he became *yaghi*, in other words he was a declared rebel; he refused to come, tore the royal firman in half, and shut the gates of his town.

When news of this event reached the King, the Prince Hezzar Mushkil was present, and it was remarked that, unable to retain the usual respect which he paid to his father, he exclaimed,

“ Thanks be to Allah, the hand has got to the sword at last,” words which were soon echoed about the court, and which shewed how long the youth had, even at his early age, been burning to distinguish himself in battle.

Orders were immediately given to assemble troops, and to march upon the disaffected city. Hezzar Mushkil entreated that he might be sent with them, and volunteered to serve in any capacity, for he had only one desire, and that was to be engaged in actual war.

It may be supposed how loath the King was to accede to his request, but when the General in command of the expedition, who was an old and experienced soldier, bound himself by an oath on the Shah's head not to allow the Prince to run into danger, he was permitted to go.

It was then that his Dedeh insisted upon buckling on her armour, taking her bow and arrows, and accompanying her charge to the field, which was also granted, after a promise exacted on the part of the prince, that she should keep at a distance when he might be engaged in the field.

She, however, who put more faith in the powers of her own countrywomen than in the military knowledge of the nation she served, secretly dispatched a messenger to the Prince's mother, with a letter stating the predicament in

which the country was placed, and requesting that a strong detachment of Hemezens, properly commanded, might forthwith be sent to aid Hezzar Mushkil in this his first military essay.

The kingdom of Bukhara having been long in a state of peace, much delay occurred before a military expedition properly equipped could be set on foot; which delay was taken every advantage of by the disaffected and rebellious, as it gave them time to deliberate and to assemble.

It had been represented to the King by the flatterers always to be found near thrones, that this revolt was one of very trifling importance, and that his troops had only to appear, to put it down at once; they added, as soon as it was known that the Prince Hezzar Mushkil was there, the world would exclaim, what dog will now venture to shew his face?

The rebels, who had many such friends at court, were anxious to confirm these reports, hoping thus to diminish the force about to be despatched against them, and they were not

frustrated in their expectations—the troops sent were inadequate to the service.

The King refused to allow any part of his body guard, who were the choicest part of his army, to be selected for the expedition, and consequently troops raised in a hurry were sent, ill equipped, and totally without reliance upon each other. A strong escort of cavalry, specially ordered to guard the person of the Prince, was the most efficient part of the little army.

A favourable conjunction of the planets having been announced, the expedition set out. Hezzar Mushkil was in the highest spirits; mounted on a fine horse, armed at all points, he was the admiration of every beholder, whilst his Dede, throwing off her age and infirmities, made every effort to shew herself worthy of such a charge, as well as to keep up the warlike reputation of her nation.

They marched by slow stages towards the object of attack, the expedition partaking more of the nature of a military parade than one destined to perform real feats of arms. At

length it entered the territory of Bikend, and then came to a halt, in order to send forward an herald to summon the city to surrender under pain of the rōyal displeasure.

The army, however, had not long to await the return of this officer, for he had scarcely proceeded many parasangs, before he fell in with a considerable body of the enemy's cavalry—the forerunner of the main body of their army.

He returned with terror in his looks, exaggerating the numbers he had met, and impressed, from what he had heard, with the dangerous tendency of the insurrection. This piece of intelligence was at first received by the Shah's general with great contempt. "Whose dogs are they," said he, "who thus can venture to appear against the Shah?" but when he found it confirmed and doubly confirmed, he then became as apprehensive as he had been the reverse, and began at once to talk of a retreat. This intention having been mentioned to the Prince, he at once opposed himself violently to such a measure, and avowed that if the general put it into execution, he



but shrill screams, that were soon found to proceed from an army of Hemezens. The noise of tongues was greater than the clang of arms, for all the privates talked, and would make themselves heard.

The Dedeh from a state of apprehension, was wound up into joy and a confidence of success. This army was commanded by the Prince's grand-mother, a general of the greatest skill and experience among the Hemezens, whilst the second in command was his own mother. Hezzar Mushkil was overjoyed, and without waiting to embrace his relations, rushed on the enemy as soon as he heard his grand-mother give the word to charge.

Such an extraordinary clatter of arms, horses, and women's tongues had never before been heard; a general discharge of arrows first took place, which tended to discompose the enemy, and was followed by a charge sword in hand, which was eminently successful. Nothing could exceed the vigour of the Hemezens—they rode in compact bodies, exciting each other by wild screams, and finally carried every thing before them.

Great were the feats performed on both sides.

Many of the Hemezens individually greatly distinguished themselves. One of the Prince's aunts, in particular, his mother's elder sister, performed feats of unheard of valour, for it is a received fact among them, that at a certain time of life they become desperate, and fight like lionesses. Several were wounded, and it was remarked how soon they were relieved, for being all "handy at their needles," as soon as one required assistance, another instantly jumped off her horse, and having a needle and thread at hand, at once sewed up the wound.

The rebels who had no idea that they should be opposed by such troops, were struck with a panic and fled in all directions. It was then that Hezzar Mushkil took the lead, and little considering that in his zeal to destroy the fugitives, he might be slaying nephews, and, perhaps, brothers-in-law, multitudes of whom were incorporated in the rebel army, followed by his escort, and kept in view by his old Dede, he pressed onward sword in hand, dealing blows right and left without remorse. Mounted on the fleetest horse in the army, he consequently outstripped every one,

and heedless of caution, allowed himself to be impelled forward by his ardour in pursuit until he was left entirely alone—he found himself, at length, engaged in a labyrinth of broken ground, from which he vainly endeavoured to extricate himself before the night closed in. It was then that he began to feel the extent of his imprudence, his horse's energies being utterly exhausted, and himself overpowered by fatigue. Hopelessly did he toil up one steep and down the sides of another, until he was totally bewildered as to the direction of the armies, and the distance which he might be from habitations.

In this state, he wandered about till near midnight, when no longer able to withstand the weariness which assailed him, he laid himself down at the side of his horse. He lay buried in the profoundest sleep until the rays of the rising sun darting into his face, aroused him. He cast his eyes around with dismay, perceiving nothing in view but an arid tenantless wilderness, without any one object to serve as a compass by which to guide his steps. But what was his still greater horror, on looking about in every direction, to find himself without a

horse ! In vain he shouted and called, in vain he wandered through all the inequalities of the surrounding tract, he could see no horse, much less any living being who could give him any account of it. It was then that he could have almost wept in despair, but when the reflection came to him, that he was a great Prince, heir to a powerful kingdom and the conqueror of an army of rebels, superior in numbers, he shook off this weakness, and determined to do his utmost towards extricating himself from his position. He felt, that when found to be missing, his attendants, and, indeed, the whole army, grandmother, mother, Dedeh and all would not fail to seek him, and he trusted that ere an hour was over, he would be restored to his friends.

In the mean while, he resolved to proceed on foot in the direction which he supposed was the right one, but as ill-luck would have it, he took precisely the contrary road.

He walked on invigorated by the morning air, with all the buoyancy of youthful spirits, and, heedless of consequences, scarcely ever looked back, so confident was he of following the right path. As he walked on, he principally

speculated in his mind upon the abrupt disappearance of his horse, and it occurred to him that during his sleep he had heard strange cries, as if of jackals and scuffling of feet, which made him suppose that the poor beast had been chased, and subsequently devoured by wild beasts. He continued to walk on, but the further he went, the further in fact he dived into the lonely waste of the desert, whose general aspect of dreariness, was enough to daunt the intrepidity of the most valiant. Hezzar Mushkil, at length, sat down totally uncertain what course to pursue—he now felt that he had entirely taken a wrong direction—what was he to do? To return was fruitless, could he find his way back, even if he tried? To remain stationary, was to die of hunger, or to become the prey of wild animals. Taking out his dagger from its sheath, he held it perpendicularly towards the ground, and then let it fall at hazard—the direction in which it fell, he determined should guide his steps. This piece of superstition he had learnt from his Dedeh, and he remembered it now with joy—“ Perhaps,” said he, “ fate will do well for me. It is in vain

now to repine at my folly—if once I get again to Bakhara, I will be more cautious; this piece of experience will be of use to me through life.”

He began to walk forwards again, now stimulated as much by hunger as by his other necessities. He continued to drag himself slowly along until night, when he almost fell from fatigue and weakness. His mind smote him with a multitude of apprehensions. Without succour—without food, he felt that he must die; then the thoughts of his aged and distracted father came before him—the triumph of his sisters and their mothers, also glanced through his thoughts. He extended himself behind a mound of earth, and worn out by fatigue, passed the night, sleeping at intervals, and starting ever and anon with feverish apprehension. In the morning, again he tried to press onwards, but his legs almost refused their office, so exhausted was he from want of food. He felt that soon he must close his eyes for ever. He wept—sorely he deplored his imprudence. He lay down on the broad face of the desert, as he thought, to die.

Scarcely had he been there an hour, ere he

felt a rush of wind and heard the flapping of wings—to his dismay he discovered that a large bird of prey had made a descent upon him, taking him for a dead carcase, and he perceived that it was followed by a long train of others. He summoned up all his strength, and rising on his legs, drew his sword to defend himself from what he feared was his final doom. The bird, apparently balked of its feast, withdrew to a rising ground, as if to wait for what it was certain would ultimately fall to its share, whilst the remaining birds, now arriving in great numbers, hovered about, and uttered wild cries. Hezzar Mushkil, who found that he had not much strength left, now that he was hard pressed, exclaimed in piteous accents, “Allah! allah! help, help to the heir of the throne of Bukhara.”

There he stood with his sword in his right hand, whilst his left was extended towards heaven. To his utter astonishment, and to his exceeding great joy, he had scarcely uttered this exclamation, ere the sounds of distant bells—the bells of a caravan, sweeping over the undulations of the plain, struck his ear. He could scarcely believe his senses—he felt

new vigour as the sounds approached and staggering forwards, perceived two horsemen at full gallop advancing. His first idea was that they were some of his own people in search of him, and this was confirmed when he saw them alight from their horses and run to meet him, but he was soon undeceived, for instead of waiting till he had spoken or bending the knee in his presence, they rushed upon him—threw him down—disarmed him—robbed him of everything he possessed, then stripping him to his shirt and drawers dragged him forcibly on, tying his arms behind his back with his own waistband, when he exclaimed :

“ What are you about, men ! I am the Prince Hezzar Mushkil, are ye mad to treat me thus ? ”

The two ruffians, for they were rude athletic men and armed to the teeth, paid no heed to these words, but commenced quarrelling with each other, one asserting that the prisoner belonged to him, and the other insisting the contrary.

“ I saw him first,” said the one, “ the sun was just a spear high when I first caught sight of him, therefore, he is my slave.”



“That’s a lie,” exclaimed the other, “come, let us go, we’ll burn its father whatever it may be, said I; and you rejoined, ‘and its mother, grand-father and grand-mother and all its ancestry besides’—that’s what you said; therefore, as I spoke first, he is mine.”

“What words are these,” rejoined the first, who was the superior in appearance, “I swear I saw him first, by the beard of Iman Mousa—by the head of the Prophet, I swear. He is my slave, upon this there are not two words.”

“Whatever you may say is a lie,” said the other with violent gesture, “do you see this arm,” bearing a brawny arm to the elbow, “this arm is ready to come to the help of this tongue,” lolling his tongue out at the same time, “and if you or any one dare to take my lawful slave from me, he and my sword shall soon become acquainted.”

“Don’t throw unmeaning words into the air,” roared out the other, at the same time giving a blow to the unfortunate prince to quicken his pace, “you—your arm—your tongue—and your sword may go where your father is grilling at this very moment.”

The other began to foam at the mouth with anger, whilst his eyes flashed fire, and was on the point of drawing his sword to make good his threat, when they came into close contact with the great mass of the caravan. They proceeded at once to the principal personage, a respectable looking man, his head and face well shawled up, wearing a good cloak and riding on an excellent mule well caparisoned.

“What has happened?” he exclaimed, in a tone of authority, as the two disputants approached, dragging forwards their wretched victim. “What have you there? where did you find him?”

“He is my slave,” said the one.

“That is a lie,” said the other, “he is mine.”

“Aga Okoos, you decide,” said they both, upon which they both began with vociferation, and a deluge of words to endeavour to make good their respective claims.

Aga Okoos, who was a merchant of Herat, whither the caravan was at present bound, began first by eyeing Hezzar Mushkil from head to foot with the eye of a connoisseur, as he might inspect a horse or a mule on

sale, and then said, "there is no harm in him—are you mad to be throwing words into the air after this fashion? Who can say who saw him first? You might as well dispute with yourself whether your right or your left eye saw him first. He is mine, I will give you a good price for him, and you shall each take half, so the dispute is at an end. Go, say no more."

Upon this the horsemen went away apparently satisfied, and Hezzar Mushkil was handed over to a muleteer, who was ordered to mount him for the rest of the journey. But ere he was led away, he indignantly lifted up his voice at the treatment he had received, and again affirmed that he was a Prince and heir to the throne of Bukhara. Aga Okoos, the merchant who did not care to have his bargain disturbed, would not lend an ear to this exposition, but others of the caravan who heard it, treasured up the words in their minds, for they were jealous of the apparently great hit which he had made.

"Go, go," exclaimed the merchant, "are you mad to talk thus?—a Prince, indeed!—who

finds a Prince in the desert?—go, tell no more lies, or by Allah, you will find that we do not understand child's play.”

And thus the unfortunate Hezzar Mushkil was dragged forcibly away, mounted on a baggage mule between two bales of merchandise, and an old horse cloth given him to cover his nakedness. His common employment on the road was to pound coffee, and when highly honoured, he was permitted to rub his master's feet and loins, after the fatigue of a long day's ride. Often did the wretched prince sigh after the luxuries in which he had been brought up, yearn for the indulgence and devotion shewn to him by his old nurse, and long for his home. To evade the miseries of his present situation by flight was out of the question—whither could he fly—ignorant of the country, without money or friends. He hoped when he should have reached Herat, that by some good stroke of fortune he might find a favourable opportunity of asserting who he was, and in the meanwhile he gained lessons of prudence and forbearance.

The merchant who was one of the richest of

Herat, having reached his house, appointed Hezzar Mushkil to perform some of the lowest offices of a slave, seeing that he was totally ignorant of the duties of a servant, and such are the vicissitudes of life—the heir to the throne of Bukhara might have been seen sweeping the court yard or sprinkling water to lay the dust before the merchant's door. It so happened that one of the travelers by the caravan, a merchant, was the rival of Aga Okoos in trade—he frequently past the spot where Hezzar Mushkil was sweeping and sprinkling water, and remarking his beauty and superiority in his appearance to that of a common slave, remembered the words he had uttered when he was first taken, exclaiming that he was the Prince of Bukhara. He sought opportunities to enter into conversation with him, and detecting the stamp of truth in the story he related of his adventures, became interested in his fate and determined to do all in his power to alleviate his wretchedness, particularly as in so doing he would be sure to injure his rival.

This merchant was in the habit sometimes

of paying his court to the grand vizier of Herat, standing in his presence and occasionally making him a present. The very first visit he made him after his return, he related the incident of a youth having been made prisoner in the desert, asserted his conviction that he was a Prince, and heir to the throne of Bukhara, and added that he was now a slave in the household of Aga Okoos.

This excited the grand vizier's attention, who happy to entertain the King, his master, with something new, did not fail to report what the merchant had communicated to him.

The King immediately ordered Aga Okoos, and his slave to appear before him, for he would not forego so excellent an opportunity to mulct the richest merchant of Herat. Aga Okoos did not feel altogether at his ease, when he received this unseasonable summons. Hezzar Mushkil could scarcely contain his joy. As they approached the King's presence, Aga Okoos knelt down and kissed the ground, whilst his slave stood erect, the conscious dignity of high birth giving him a manly confidence. The King

gazed in silence for some time upon both, but particularly kept his eye fixed upon Hezzar Mushkil, admiring his handsome person and stately carriage; at length, he exclaimed to the merchant, "O man, say what is this you have done? Whose dog are you, who dare to make a slave of a King's son?"

"As I am your humble sacrifice," said the merchant, trembling from head to foot with apprehension, "I am ignorant of the import of your Majesty's words. I bought the slave at a venture as we travelled in the caravan. He was brought to me naked and miserable, and I clothed him and took care of him."

"So, is it," said the King. "Now speak," said he, turning to Hezzar Mushkil, "tell me who you are."

"My father is King of Bukhara," said the Prince. "I am heir to his throne. After having vanquished the rebels of Bikend, I followed the fugitives, till I lost my way in the desert, that is my story—this man knows it; and now O King, I claim your skirt, and permission to return to my country."

“Seize that dog,” pointing to Aga Okoos, said the king to his servants, “and beat him till I cry stop—he will not steal King’s sons again.”

Upon which the merchant was straightway seized, his feet thrown into the air, and soundly beaten. He was then dragged away, his slave taken from him, and the King of Herat remained the disposer of the fate of Hezzar Mushkil.

The Prince of Bukhara did not improve his position by falling into the hands of the King of Herat, who was a faithless, cruel and avaricious man. Aga Okoos after having been well beaten, was also heavily fined, but far from effectually releasing Hezzar Mushkil, the King only laid plans how he might best secure him for his own service. He treated him, at first, with some appearance of kindness, and gave him into the custody of the grand vizier, with orders to be provided with clothes, and fed at his expence, but the grand vizier was also avaricious, and thus the Prince faring ill, willingly would have fled the city, had he possessed the opportunity of so doing. The King



contemplated the hope of enriching his coffers by exacting a ransom from the King of Bukhara for his son, and to Hezzar Mushkil's daily entreaty that he might be allowed to depart, he lent a deaf ear, putting him off with excuses and lies. In the meanwhile, the wretched youth was almost reduced to beg his bread among the menials of the Shah's household, so ill did the grand vizier provide for his daily necessities. He was, however, strictly watched, and orders given at the city gates, that he should not be allowed a free egress, and there we will for the present leave him, in order to see what was taking place in the kingdom of Bukhara.

The battle with the rebels being over, and the Hemezens and the royal troops a little recovered from the excitement of gaining a victory, every one began to enquire what had become of the Prince Hezzar Mushkil? A general search was ordered, but concluded without effect—his own escort asserting, that owing to the superior speed of his horse, he had been led away in pursuit of the fugitives beyond their powers of overtaking him, and

that when night came on they entirely lost all traces of him.

The Dedeh, at this intelligence, became almost frantic with grief, and instantly calling for a fresh horse, asserted that she would rather die on the field, than relinquish the hope of finding him. The general of the King's troops, considering that Hezzar Mushkil had been placed under his special charge, became alarmed for his own head, whilst the Prince's mother and grandmother, shewed as much interest as their nature permitted for a man child. The whole country was now overrun with the royal troops in search of Hezzar Mushkil, and had the rebels been on the alert, they might easily have redeemed their lost victory. At length the Dedeh, after she had ridden for a whole day without leaving the saddle, espied in the distance on the face of the desert a dark object or objects to which she instantly bent her steps. There she found a congregation of vultures standing round about, and gorged with the spoils of the carcass of a dead horse, upon which they had been feasting. As she approached, the

birds could scarcely flee from her, so surfeited were they—this circumstance would not have been heeded, had she not discovered a saddle and its trappings strewn in all directions, and these she recognised to have belonged to her beloved Hezzar Mushkil. The transition in her thoughts from this sight to his death, was instantaneous, and she made such piteous lamentations, that even the gorged birds were scared. She threw herself from off her horse and prostrating herself on the saddle, lay entranced upon the ground, moaning and weeping in most deplorable accents. Her attendants having come to her aid, she was persuaded to remount, and, accompanied by the sad remains of the saddle, was conveyed to head-quarters, not without a long and fruitless search having been made for the body, naturally expected to be found near that of the horse.

It was a sad and woeful day, when this intelligence reached the King of Bukhara. The interval was long ere his attendants and courtiers could venture to unfold to him the great loss he had sustained. He perceived by

their looks that all was not right, and although much rejoicing had taken place on account of the victory, yet it was evident something was still untold. Vainly did the wretched monarch enquire for his son, he only received evasive answers, until on the arrival of the Dedeh, the grand vizier thought it advisable that he no longer should be kept in ignorance, and he determined himself to make known the dire event. With ashes sprinkled on his head, and torn clothes, he approached with a sorrowful step, and informed the King of the fears entertained for the safety of his son. No words can describe the scene which took place. The cries and wailings of the bereft father were heard all over the palace. An universal silence took place throughout the city.

After the first paroxysm of the King's grief had subsided, he shut himself up in his most private apartment and refused food. No one ventured to approach him. He derived no comfort from his daughters or their mothers, for they were traitors. The grand vizier alone

ventured, at length, to approach him, and when he did so, with accents of comfort on his lips, he suggested that as the remains of the Prince had not been discovered, there might still be hope he was yet alive. To this hope, the unfortunate father clung with alacrity, and forthwith ordered messengers to be sent express on all the high roads, with orders to pursue their course even to the principal cities in Asia, there to make inquiries for the lost Prince.

With this temporary alleviation did he smother his fears—an alternative which did not, however, prevent him from cutting off the commander-in-chief's head, for not having sufficiently watched over the safety of his son. As for the old Hemezen, she actually pined with grief, for nothing could persuade her, that her much cherished Hezzar Mushkil was still among the living.

In the meanwhile, the King of Herat treated his prisoner as an hostage, and did not cease to lay schemes for rendering the accident which had placed him in his power a source of gain. Hezzar Mushkil, on the other

hand, planned his escape more than once, but never effectually, until having one day met with a master muleteer, who had been kind to him in the caravan, he succeeded by dint of promises to persuade him to allow him to pass as one of his mule drivers, the first time he should again leave the city.

A caravan was collecting for Ispahan, and thither the muleteer now informed him he was about to travel, having let his mules on hire to a merchant about to load carpets, (the manufacture of Herat) for that market. On the day appointed for their departure, Hezzar Mushkil disguised, in the coarse dress of a muleteer's boy, passed through the city gates without notice, and thus proceeded during the journey to perform the duties of his office, whilst joy beamed in his heart for his deliverance, though apprehensive lest his evil fortune should still persecute him, and cause him to be discovered and seized. But this was not the case—the muleteer kept his secret to the last, and after much hardship and fatigue, he was at length cheered by the minarets of Ispahan appearing to his

longing eyes. The caravan directed its steps to the usual resort of the Herat merchants, a caravanserai near the great square, called the Maiden Shah, in the centre of which is situated the royal palace. Although thus far, Hezzar Mushkil seemed to have been favoured by fortune, still it was not long before he discovered that he was mistaken, for scarcely had the last mule entered the gates of the caravanserai, than its owner, the muleteer, the only man whom the unfortunate Prince could call his friend at Ispahan, was suddenly taken ill, and notwithstanding the various remedies prescribed, died. What could he do to gain his bread, a stranger in an immense capital, without a profession and without means? Alas! he knew not. For several days, he wandered about wretched and forlorn, living upon the few pieces of money, with which his departed friend had supplied him.

The gates of the royal garden were not far distant from the place where the mules put up, and frequently he watched the time when remnants of fruit and vegetables were thrown

therefrom, to seize upon bits which might afford him nourishment. One day whilst thus waiting half famished, it so happened that he was espied by one of the master gardeners, who seeing a strong, well made youth in distress, accosted him and inquired whether he was willing to work as a labourer. Hezar Mushkil eagerly assented, and forthwith acceded to the offer. Before another half hour had elapsed he was seen, spade in hand, digging a bed, preparatory to the reception of flower seeds.

Although he had never before handled an implement of horticulture, yet his natural adroitness was such, that he soon became as efficient as the most experienced labourer, and, indeed, might fairly be said to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow. The garden in which he was employed belonged to that part of the palace allotted to the use of the ladies of the seraglio, and as no man was ever allowed to be present when they appeared, it was at particular hours only that the labourers were ordered to their work.



Here Hezzar Mushkil passed many a long day, supported in spirit by the buoyancy of youth, though never for a moment forgetting the advantages of his birth. He sighed when he recollected, as he cast his eyes over the spacious gardens and the gorgeous palace, that he too once commanded such places as supreme lord, although now condemned to labour in them as the lowest of slaves.

He felt that the recent vicissitudes of his life were working a favourable change in his character, breaking down his arrogance, and teaching him the ways of humble life, but he was also warned by a secret voice within, that, by perseverance and patience, and adherence to the dictates of prudence, he would again be restored to his position in the world. He determined to remain silent upon the subject of his birth, and only to declare himself when he should find a fitting opportunity.

Working with assiduity, he soon became a favourite with the master gardener, and was distinguished by him from among the other labourers. His fine person and handsome

face, although disguised by the coarsest of attire and much tanned by exposure to weather, possessed an air of superiority which made him remarkable even among the rude men with whom he associated, but he acted his part so well, that no one could suspect that he was in fact a king's son.

Among the labourers there was a youth, or rather boy, who, by his lively and amiable manner, attracted Hezzar Mushkil's attention. He was the son of the master gardener, and, therefore, enjoyed privileges to which the other labourers were strangers.

He frequently entered into conversation with the Prince, and excited his curiosity by what he related concerning the ladies of the court who frequented the garden. He said, that during the preceding year he had been allowed to remain when they were present, because he was then only a boy, but now that he had exceeded the appointed age, he was utterly excluded.

He had endeavoured in vain to persuade the head eunuch, an Ethiopian without mercy or

compassion, that he was still in his boyhood, but the monster would have cut his head off, so he asserted, had he been found loitering in the forbidden ground, one minute after the order for his expulsion had been issued.

“ However, for all that,” exclaimed the youth, “ I laugh at his beard, for I still meet my friend.”

“ Who is your friend ?” said the Prince.

“ She is one of the Lady Sultanness’s attendants—a wonderful maiden, who often procures for me sweet words from her mistress, which last year brought me presents, and a new suit of clothes—a wonderful maiden she is !”

“ And what kind of person may the Lady Sultanness be,” inquired Hezzar Mushkil.

“ What can I say to that ?” said the other with surprise in his accents, “ such a creature has never before been seen—I tremble when I think of her ; she is called the Full Moon of Beauty, but such a description is nonsense: there are no words to explain her perfections. Her cheeks are like a peach, and her eyes like black cherries—what more can I say ?”

“Have you seen her often,” inquired the Prince with animation.

“Oh very often when I was a boy; she often took notice of me, and said that the Shah should make me one of his *gholams*, but here I am still a gardener.”

“When did you last see her; could not I see her?” inquired Hezzar Mushkil.

“Heaven forbid!” exclaimed the youth. “If you had ever beheld one of those black fiends the eunuchs with their drawn swords, as they enter the garden to drive mankind from before them, you would never ask such a question;—they slay without hearing a word from any one.”

“Then have you never more seen your friend?” inquired the Prince.

The gardener's son looked confused, but at length confessed that he had—“But,” said he, “as you love your soul, by the salt of the King, swear that you will never mention this to any one.”

He then explained that, in the centre of the inner garden stood a large octagonal summer

house, in the centre of which is a beautiful white marble fountain, around which, whenever the Lady Sultanness takes the air, are spread velvet and satin sofas and cushions ; the whole building is open to every breeze, and its beauties are so much prized, that it is called the Eighth Paradise. In each angle of this building, above the door, are small closets, just large enough to receive one or even two persons. "When I know that the Lady Sultanness is to come," added the boy, "I conceal myself in one of them, and fearless of the savage negroes, I there await my friend, who, being aware of the circumstance, fails not to look up to the small window in the closet, where she is sure to see my eye gazing at her. She then manages to steal away from her companions, and we enjoy some very agreeable conversation."

"You must take me with you," said Hezzar Mushkil.

The youth upon hearing this demand grew pale with apprehension. "Are you mad," said he, "to ask me this ? if even the tip of your whisker were seen by the eunuchs, before you could say

*aman ! aman !* pray ! pray ! your head would be off."

The Prince did not urge his request farther on this occasion ; but his curiosity was so much excited from what he had heard, that he never lost an opportunity, when alone with the young gardener, of persuading him to overcome every scruple, and allowing him to be his companion upon his next visit to the summer house.

It so fell out that the chief eunuch, that arch-demon fell ill, and this piece of news was received with joy by the gardeners, for the second in command and the under officers were known to be more lenient than their master. It was also heard with pleasure, by the women of the harem, who hating their tyrant, lost no time in persuading their mistress that during this auspicious reprieve they might enjoy a day of comparative liberty. It was, therefore, announced in the morning that the Lady Sultanness would take the air at noon, and the summer-house was accordingly prepared.

Hezzar Mushkil immediately persuaded the young gardener to take advantage of the opportunity ; and before the eunuchs had

appeared to clear the gardens, the Prince and his companion were snugly secreted in their hiding place.

They heard the approach of the dispensers of life and death with awe. Their voices, when issuing their orders, were more like those of wild beasts than human beings, and whilst they were spreading the mattresses and making ready the summer-house, the Prince and the young gardener could scarcely venture to breathe, so fearful were they of being discovered.

The gardens were composed of terrasses laid out into flower beds and straight walks, intersected by alternate summer-houses and basins of water, in the midst of which fountains played and refreshed the air. Near the building prepared on this occasion was situated the largest basin, a broad and ample piece of water, clear as crystal and shaded by a profusion of trees and waving shrubs. Here when the women were left to themselves, they passed the heat of the day bathing and performing gambols in the water, and here it was said the Shah himself was wont sometimes

to solace himself from the cares of government, by taking a part in such pastimes.

There were two apertures in the closet where the Prince and the gardener were secreted—one looking towards the garden, the other within the summer-house. As soon as the eunuchs had passed, and everything was reported to be in readiness for the Lady Sultaness, the sound of women's voices, laughing, bantering and talking with joy and merriment were heard, and soon a numerous band appeared in all the freedom of the seraglio dress, unveiled, and seemingly full of determination to enjoy themselves to the utmost.

They approached in various parties: some were menials who came to prepare the special seat of their mistress, bringing with them soft cushions and silken coverlets, others bore large circular fans, others again were entrusted with musical instruments, which they placed in convenient spots, to be used as might be required. Crystal and porcelain vases containing refreshing sherbets were deposited among the most delicious fruits. Melons, grapes, peaches,



nectarines and pomegranates were heaped up in costly bowls, and spread in endless profusion on the floor, and on the margin of the sparkling fountain.

The Prince waited with impatience for the approach of the Lady Sultanness, and did not cease inquiring of his companion when she would appear. At length sounds of musical instruments and singing were heard, and in the distance, through one of the arched windows affording a view into a long avenue of the garden, was seen a procession of women, their light dresses of various and brilliant colours floating in the breeze, and their whole demeanour denoting innocent joy and freedom from constraint. Hezzar Mushkil strained his eyes to discover the object of his curiosity ; but owing to the intervention of the woman who walked before, he could not distinguish her well until she drew near, when half extended upon a silver litter, which was borne by her attendants, his eyes were greeted with a view of the Princess. He could not at first see her face, but when having quitted the litter she walked up the steps of the summer-house, and

stood erect, in all the dignity of beauty, his heart ceased to beat and his eyes could scarcely perform their office, so dazzled was he by the charms of the lovely being before him. Impelled by a dignified consciousness of birth, he would have asserted his true pretensions, and rushed forward to make himself known, but suddenly awakened to his real position, by feeling that his face rested upon the ignoble shoulders of a gardener's son, he checked his too impetuous feelings, and once again relapsed into the labourer.

The Lady Sultanness as she was usually called, was the King of Persia's favourite daughter, and owing to her matchless beauty, her charm of manner and character, and her great talents, swayed her father with a gentle though imperceptible despotism. She enjoyed an establishment of her own, distinct from the royal wives, who were of comparative insignificance to this royal maiden. She was now in the prime of her youth and had refused offers from almost all the potentates of Asia, to which she had ever leant a deaf ear, being resolved to die a

maid, rather than marry a man she could not love.

When she had seated herself in the summer-house, a little laughing girl darted forward from among the troop of surrounding women, to take charge of her slippers, as she quitted them to extend her small and beautifully shaped feet upon the silken sofa.

“There, there,” said the gardener in a whisper, thrusting his elbow against the Prince, “there she is—that is mine,” and immediately he perceived the young lady casting her eyes furtively towards the aperture of the closet, by which it was plain the parties concerned had recognized each other. The Prince who was watching every expression of the Princess’ face, observed that she smiled as she observed her attendant, and thought he heard her say the words, “Is he there?” which made him conclude, that the intelligence between the gardener’s son and her attendant was approved by her.

He then heard her say to her women, with a voice full of music and benevolence, “If the

eunuchs are gone, as the day is hot, you may bathe." Upon which all the women, with tumultuous joy, took their departure, leaving the Princess alone, at which she seemed greatly pleased, for straightway she took a book from under her pillow, preparatory to reading. But when the women were about to disperse, calling by name to her shoe bearer, the young gardener's friend, she said in a low voice, "Stay—you may see him here, I too will speak to him."

Upon which, when the apartment was cleared of the women, the little laughing girl approached the closet and standing beneath, said: "Hassan," (for that was the youth's name) "come down, the Lady Sultanness wishes to see you."

Hassan, upon receiving this order, was perplexed, for as the Prince lay immediately behind him, he could not well extricate himself without causing his companion to get out first; therefore there was a pause and delay.

"Why do you not stir?" said the maiden—"make haste."

"I am coming," said Hassan, but still did not move.

"What has happened? are you lame or afraid?" said the girl.

"Nothing," said Hassan, "but—"

"But what?" said the other, "what have you there behind you?" having perceived the tip of the Prince's cap. -

Hassan now became quite anxious, lest he should offend the Princess, and said in a low voice,

"Speak not a word, but I have a friend here, and he must get out first."

"What does Hassan say?" said the Princess, with the voice of a siren, gently taking her eyes from her book; "why does he delay?"

Her attendant, in her turn, was full of anxiety and said he would come in a minute, when suddenly Hezzar Mushkil no longer able to withstand the fascination of the divine being before him, nor longer brook the irksome position in which he lay, emerged from the closet, and stood before her.

The Princess at this unexpected intrusion uttered a faint scream ; but almost burst out laughing when she perceived Hassan on his knees before her, with a face full of supplication, saying, " Pity—pity—it is nothing. I only brought him with me to shew him Fatma," which was the name of the laughing girl.

This explanation seemed to appease the benign looking Princess, and she then allowed Hassan to retire and talk with his friend. In the meanwhile Hezzar Mushkil having had time to compose himself, when the Princess asked him who he was, and how he had ventured to risk himself in so much danger, answered in a manner that perfectly astonished her.

She eyed him with attention and new feelings when she observed the dignity of his person, and remarked the choice expression of his language, for although clad in the garb of a labourer, nothing could conceal from a discerning eye that his real position was greatly superior to his appearance.

The Prince, not being prepared to make himself known, little anticipating such a result to his adventurous proceeding, was cautious in his answers.

He felt reluctant in asserting his dignity under the present circumstances, appearing as he did in the garments of a pauper, and the associate of a menial.

“Who are you?” said the Princess in accents inspiring confidence, “If you be in distress you will be relieved.”

“I am an unfortunate man,” said Hezzar Mushkil, “what more can I say? Destiny, which one day works for evil, another engenders good, will, perhaps, with the blessing of Allah, restore me to mine own;—in the meanwhile, heaven be praised for its mercies, and particularly for refreshing my eyes with the light which now shines upon them.”

“Are you from Ispahan?” said the Princess looking at him with renewed interest.

“Your slave is not of this country, his house is far away; by strange and almost incredible adventures, born heir to everything

that the heart of man can desire, he is now without a friend, and forced, from necessity, to till the ground for his maintenance; still he does not repine, for he has seen that which less favoured mortals yearn in vain to behold."

"You must leave me," said the Princess recovering from her astonishment, and asserting a power over her feelings which she was fast losing, "you are here in danger of being observed, and if seized upon, your life will be forfeited. Let me know how I can help you, and in me you will find a friend."

"Your slave submits to every decree pronounced by your lips," said the Prince scarcely able to suppress the longing desire he had of declaring himself; "his life is at your command. Oh may the day come, when he may speak a more intelligible language, his ambition will then be to awaken other sentiments than those of pity."

"What words are these," said the Princess, alarmed at a declaration for which she was not in the least prepared, and fearful to avow to



herself, how much one so mean in appearance, had excited feelings beyond those of commiseration. "Why not speak plain? Why conceal any thing, when I repeat to you again, that if you are necessitous, you will find relief. My father the King's gate is open to every one; but you must be gone." Further communication was stopped by the distant calls of the eunuchs, warning the women to retire from unpermitted parts of the garden, sounds which so alarmed the Princess, that she peremptorily ordered Hezzar Mushkil and his companion to return to their place of concealment, which they did without delay. But in so doing, calling Hassan to her, she dismissed him with words of small import, whilst in a parenthesis, she added that on the first favourable opportunity he might come again, making no prohibition to prevent him from being accompanied by his present companion.

Hezzar Mushkil retired overwhelmed with feelings entirely new to his nature. Love had taken possession of his heart, and

thoughtlessness was changed into solicitude. He became silent and pensive, and after the departure of the Princess, having extricated himself from his hiding place, he could think and dream of nothing, but of her exquisite charms, and dwell with rapture upon every word she had uttered. Hassan was the only one with whom he could communicate, and with him he did not cease to form plans for seeing her again. But as he contemplated his melancholy position, and the difficulties which, he foresaw, would stand in the way of making himself known, his spirits drooped, and he exhausted himself with hopeless wailing.

At length, it was announced that the Princess would pass the whole day in the garden, and that, owing to a slight indisposition, it was her intention to be attended by only a very few of her ladies.

This piece of information was communicated to Hassan by the young shoe-bearer, and as soon communicated to the Prince, whose whole being became immediately elated with love and hope. But his joy was checked, when

he contemplated the meanness of his attire and he was determined never again to offend the eyes of one so ardently beloved, by an unworthy exhibition of himself. If by the assistance of better clothes, he could present himself in a manner more corresponding to his rank and birth, he hoped to produce a favourable impression upon her heart, and thus lead her to give credence to his tale.

But where to procure such attire? there was the difficulty—he had no money, nor a friend from whom he could borrow. A thought, however, struck him. He had acquired such entire influence over Hassan, by the superiority of his education, that it occurred to him he might for a short time borrow the clothes of Hassan's father, who in accordance to his situation, was not deficient in elegance of appearance. He soon proposed this, and although the youth was at first struck with apprehension, still Hezzar Mushkil managed to place his request in so plausible a light, that he agreed to further his wishes.

Accordingly on the appointed morning,

Hassan appeared bearing a bundle containing his father's clothes, which Hezzar Mushkil having secreted, he hastened to the hot bath, where he washed and perfumed his person. He then returned, and doffing his rags, clothed himself in the master gardener's best clothes — for such, indeed, they were. When Hezzar Mushkil stepped from behind the thicket, where he had dressed himself, and stood before Hassan, the youth gazed in utter amazement at the change. He saw a being before him of a new order, so entirely did the princely appearance predominate over that of the peasant.

“Mashallah!” exclaimed Hassan, as he almost involuntarily prostrated himself before one, whom he had only a few minutes before looked upon as an equal.

“Let us go,” exclaimed the Prince, “there is danger in delay.”

“Let us go,” said Hassan, following obedient to his call.

They succeeded in secreting themselves in their former place of concealment, before the eunuchs made their appearance, and there

awaited in silence the arrival of the Princess but they felt anxious for their own safety when they perceived the head eunuch in person, who having recovered from his illness, seemed to be impelled by renewed energies, prying about with the watchfulness of a lynx, vociferating oaths and maledictions, and promising instant death to whomsoever should be found disobedient to his mandates.

It was evident that the illness of the Princess was merely a pretext to be left alone, for she beamed with charms and fascination. Having taken her seat in the summer-house, she dismissed her attendants, with the exception of Hassan's friend, who soon was sent to invite him to appear.

The Prince was not long in appearing also, and when with hesitating steps, he approached the object of his adoration, he became alarmed when he perceived the state of trepidation, into which she was thrown by his appearance. But love, ever expert at making intercession for faults, soon interfered in favour of the Prince, and allowed the words he ventured to utter to be received with favour.

The Princess, at the first glance discovered the former gardener in the well dressed man who now stood before her, and the various conjectures which she had made, as to who that gardener could really be, during the time she had passed since they last met, were now, she felt, about being cleared up. Deep blushes overspread her face, and she trembled from head to foot, when Hezzar Mushkil knelt before her, and kissed the hem of her garment, and still more was she agitated, when, with a voice full of the deepest emotion, and with a face beaming with love, tempered by respect, he said :

“Your humble servant has once more ventured to appear before you. He kisses the print of your slipper : its very dust is collyrium to his eyes. Forgive this piece of assurance, one single moment of your displeasure will be his death ; he comes impelled by his heart, and your condescension ;—be mindful of him, for he only lives in your smiles.”

Every word was heard by the Princess with wonder and astonishment, and although she had been struck by his language, when in

the garb of a peasant, yet never could she have conceived that he was in every way so infinitely superior, as he proved himself, to the courtiers or dignitaries of her father's court. So charmed was she, that instinctively she treated him as an equal. With an assumed coldness of manner, she merely confined herself to ask him who he was.

“ I will no longer conceal,” he said, “ who the miserable man is who stands before you—I have no one here to answer for the truth of my words, and should I find no sympathy in your breast for my misfortunes, then I have no other refuge but despair.”

“ Speak on !” said the Princess with impatience in her accent.

“ This less than the least,” said the Prince “ is heir to the throne of Bukhara ; he feels that he is not unworthy of throwing himself at your feet, for his father is a King, and he counts kings for his ancestors. Thrown by a series of wonderful adventures into the miserable state in which you see him, he has now but one hope left, which is, that through your favour he may receive permission

to leave Persia, and return to his own country." He then related the whole of his story, without omitting any circumstance which could give it credibility.

The Princess's heart beat with joy and exultation at hearing this declaration, for the sentiments, which in spite of her better reason, she had felt for this stranger, were at once vindicated. Without waiting to ascertain the truth of his assertions, she allowed herself to give way to her feelings, and was not slow in manifesting how much she was charmed with the Prince's appearance and conversation, for she now had met with one who realized her conceptions of excellence; and his station in life being equal to her own, she deemed it no crime to cherish and encourage the impression he had produced.

"Stranger as you are to me," she said, "I am willing to believe what you assert, for your conduct answers for your noble birth. All-powerful destiny has brought us together, and should that same power be still propitious, let us hope that it may lead us on to future happiness."



“Adorable Princess!” exclaimed Hezza Mushkil in the excess of his joy, “how can your slave ever repay this great condescension? May the day come, when, after having seen the King, my father, and returning to Persia, I may be allowed to claim, in my own person, a continuation of the privilege of approaching and adoring you. I can contemplate no greater recompense for all the miseries I have undergone—the hunger and thirst in the desert—the tyranny and violence which I underwent in Herat—the degradation I have endured in the royal gardens—no privation can ever be put into competition with the one privilege of being allowed to gaze on those unrivalled charms.”

“You overrate my poor merits,” answered the daughter of the King of Persia; “we are such as it hath pleased Allah to make us; but we confess that never have we met with so great a proof of the good providence of Allah, as having thrown us in your path, poor and miserable though you be, and surrounded by luxuries and royal state though we are.”

With this and such like discourse did the lovers entertain each other, forgetful of time and situation; and there we must leave them for the present to relate some particulars which are likely to disturb their felicity.

The master gardener, on the morning when the circumstances we have just described took place, was suddenly called upon to wait upon the chief eunuch, who having been confined by illness, now appeared for the first time since his confinement, in the full vigour of an untoward and captious temper. He found everything wrong in the royal gardens—the walks ill swept—the fountains deficient in water—frogs croaking in the marble basins—he even complained that the flowers did not blow as he could wish, nor did the nightingales sing in their accustomed bowers.

In this ill-humour he sent for the master gardener, who wishing to show him all honour, immediately called for his best clothes, wherewith to appear before this arbitrator of his destiny.

“Where are my clothes?” he inquired in haste of his wife.

“What do I know?” she answered; “they were here but this morning, enclosed in the cotton wrapper.”

The master gardener searched in vain, and then exclaimed to his wife, “Oh little woman! are you mad to allow my garments to be stolen?”

“What means this?” she said, at the same time calling to her servant maid to explain the deficiency. “Has any one been here this morning?”

“No one but Hassan,” said the maid; “perhaps he took them, for he carried a bundle under his arm.”

Great search was immediately instituted for Hassan, but no where was he to be found, until a labourer asserted he had seen him proceeding towards the royal gardens accompanied by his friend Hezzar Mushkil.

In this dilemma, the master gardener was obliged to appear in his working dress, dirty and begrimed, before the dreaded chief of the eunuchs.

“Oh man!” exclaimed that ill-conditioned person, “are we a dog that you should keep me

waiting thus? why do you not appear—and when you do appear, why come ye as if you were visiting a dunghill?—I am a personage after all—I am an officer of the King—shall I be made to swallow abomination after this fashion?”

“As I am your sacrifice,” said the master gardener with great humility, “the reason of your slave’s delay, is that his ill-luck has deprived him of the proper robe of decency wherewith to clothe himself in order to appear before your excellency. That ill-fated son of your humble slave, Hassan, has born it away, whither Allah only knows, and in company of that stranger youth from Bukhara, is departed and nowhere to be found.”

“Ah is it so?” said the suspicious head of the women; “whither is he gone?”

“They were seen walking towards the royal gardens,” answered the master gardener, little suspecting the dilemma in which he was about to involve his son.

“Here, children!” exclaimed the chief eunuch to his attendants, with a voice portentous of every evil passion. “Go straightway to the

gardens—search every nook and corner, go even to the very spot where the Lady Sultanness is seated, return and tell me whether any of the imps of Satan in the shape of man be there or not—or stay,” said he, his suspicions getting the better of his patience, “I will go myself, and should I see the tip of a whisker within a league of the place, I will make every ill-conditioned soul jump out of each unsainted body.”

Upon which gathering up the skirts of his robe, and clothing his face with exaggerated sourness, he sallied forth followed by his myrmidons.

He said nothing, but true it is that a torrent of thoughts, portending violence, passed rapidly through his head into his heart. On entering the garden, he marshalled his men throughout the shrubberies, as a head sportsman might station his under-keepers; but no trace of man was found. The few women who had attended the Lady Sultanness, were disposed of in a distant part of the enclosure, and nobody was there to intercept the arrival of the violent man, before he reached the

very spot, were the King of Persia's daughter and the Prince, were in close conversation. The chief eunuch no sooner caught sight of them, than he raised a cry, which can only be compared to the screech of a wild beast. His livid face broke out into a scarlet hue, his eyes became wild with animation, and his skinny hands grasping his dagger, he continued to vociferate until he found himself surrounded by his attendants, when rushing forwards, he darted upon the lovers like a famished tiger seeking his prey.

Upon hearing the awful sound of the chief eunuch's voice, the Lady Sultanness and the Prince started with dismay, and when they perceived him followed by his attendants advancing with hostile intentions, Hezzar Mushkil stood on his feet, and interposed himself as a screen before the Princess. Hassan too, who was at a small distance, rushed forwards, and these movements had the effect of averting that instant death, which otherwise would have been the Prince's fate.

Before many minutes had expired, they were both so effectually overpowered by superior

a word relating to his regal pretensions, and the chief eunuch had detected him in the very act of invading the privacy of the royal harem. He was, therefore, denied the privilege of seeing the King, and nothing appeared to be left to him but the ignominious death to which he was condemned.

It is possible, had the Sultanness been allowed immediate access to her father, that the urgency of her explanations, impelled by the warmth of her feelings, might have averted the impending calamity; but state etiquette intervened—the King was at that moment under the hands of the court physician; the astrologers too, had been at work; the Princess could not possibly see him, therefore, the Prince was hopelessly fated to lose his life.

All crimes committed against the sanctity of the harem, are capital in a Mahomedan country, consequently the unfortunate Hezzar Mushkil was condemned to undergo a public execution. Hassan, in consideration of his youth, (for it was a disputed question among the lawyers, whether he was a man or boy),

was simply bastinadoed on the soles of his feet, but he was ordered to be present at the beheading of his companion, in order that he might learn a salutary lesson for the future.

The apparatus of death was exhibited before the principal gate of the palace, called Allah Capi; the great square was filled with the gaping multitude, guards were posted in a circle to keep the place of execution clear, and the executioner stood in the midst with drawn sword and his arm bare, waiting the arrival of his victim.

Hezzar Mushkil, seeing that all hopes were fled, and that no possibility was left of escape, had made up his mind to die in a manner worthy of a Prince, and the descendant of a Hemezen. All that he demanded was the permission to indite two letters, which having been granted, he wrote one to his father, acknowledging his great imprudence at having allowed himself to be led away in pursuit of the rebels; that all his misfortunes had been the produce of that event. He prayed his father's forgiveness, and craved his blessing, whilst he



entreated him not to allow his blood to remain unavenged.

The second letter was to the Princess, in which he put forth sentiments worthy of his birth, and avowed the most unbounded love for her; he entreated her to discard every thought implying her negligence of his safety, and implored her to honour his memory by an occasional sigh of regret.

His mind being relieved by these acts, he boldly marched forward with a steady pace and firm countenance to the place of his doom, amidst the scoffs and jeers of the royal household, but accompanied by the sympathy of the assembled women, who could not see so handsome a man go to execution, without evincing the expression of their tenderness.

If this were the whole misery that awaited him, all had been well, but the malignant chief of the eunuchs, who in the struggle of seizing the Prince, had been called 'no beard,' had determined upon inflicting something more than mere loss of head, and, consequently, had prepared a mangy ass, upon which he ordered

the Prince to mount, with his face to the tail, and the tail in his hand; whilst a crier proceeded in advance, exclaiming: "This is he who calls himself Prince of Bukhara, it is lawful to spit in his face."

When Hezzar Mushkil was made acquainted with the proposed indignity, he stood like a lion at bay, and positively refused to obey; insolence and violence were showered upon him—he was beaten, spit upon, and would have been torn to pieces, had he not been seized and by force mounted upon the ass; but such was his strength, and his resistance so effectual, that the indignity in contemplation was about to be abandoned, when of a sudden, a great sensation was produced by the appearance of a cavalcade of way-worn travellers, dressed in a foreign garb, who were making their way to the gate of the royal palace.

The prisoner and the executioner were left unheeded, whilst every eye was turned towards the travellers.

"Who and what are they? whence do they come? what do they here?" were questions

bandied about, and which no one could answer.

The cavalcade consisted of about a dozen persons, the chief of whom was a stately looking man, with a Tartar face, and dressed in a costume which denoted that he came from the east. But there was one among them, it was difficult at first to ascertain whether man or woman, who, upon close investigation, proved to be a woman, and one, the oldest of her kind. Her face was withered with the wrinkles of care; she wore an iron helmet, a bow and arrows were slung about her person, and she bestrode her horse with the ease of an old warrior. She took little heed of the curiosity which her appearance created, but kept casting her eyes about in every direction, as if seeking some dearly beloved object. Suddenly, upon approaching the royal gate, they fell upon the erect and commanding person of Hezzar Mushkil; when, at the same moment, his eyes catching a glimpse of her, they each uttered a loud and piercing cry.

He extended his hands towards her, whilst

she, clapping her stirrups to her horse's sides, dashed forward, and in spite of every impediment, succeeded in gaining the spot where he stood, when throwing herself from off her horse, she—the old Hemezen, the Dedeh—enjoyed the entrancing pleasure of clasping in her arms her long lost Hezzar Mushkil.

“And have I found you at last! light of my eyes!” exclaimed the agitated old woman, —“where have you been?—and what are you standing here for?”

“I am waiting to have my head cut off,” said Hezzar Mushkil with great composure. “These tyrants won't believe that I am the King of Bukhara's son.”

“Not believe!” exclaimed the old Hemezen, “they eat dirt for their pains—you are not only the King of Bukhara's son, but his only son;—what words are these?”

The malignant chief of the eunuchs, observing this pause, and that his orders were not obeyed, was about to issue his commands to continue the ceremonial, when a herald was seen to issue from the palace, bearing orders from the grand-vizier that all further

proceeding should stop, until a proper reception had been given to the ambassadors just arrived from the King of Bukhara, of whose approach he had just been informed, and who were he curious in executions, might have the honour conferred upon him of being entertained by the sight of one.

To the astonishment of all, the ambassador himself, as soon as he perceived Hezzar Mushkil, straightway fell at his feet.

“How is this!” exclaimed the King of Persia’s officers; “he is a Prince after all.”

“This is child’s play,” vociferated the chief of the eunuchs, “are our beards to be laughed at in this manner? why do we not slay the man who defiled the royal harem?”

His words, however, were not heeded; but Hezzar Mushkil was straightway clothed with a suitable dress and conducted to the grand-vizier, escorted by the ambassador and the old Hemezen.

The vizier was a wise man, and although he was convinced, by the appearance of Hezzar Mushkil, that he could not be a gardener’s

workman, still he was afraid of declaring him to be the dignitary he pretended, upon the declaration of strangers—for such were the ambassador from the King of Bukhara and his companions. When they were seated he thus spoke,

“ I am not a man to disbelieve what so many circumstances tell me to be true—that in this young man now before me I see the son of the King of Bukhara ;—but a vizier, who is the eyes, and ears, and head of the state must be cautious, and he cannot fortify himself with too many proofs before he makes assertions in the face of his royal master, the King. What proof, oh ambassador ! have you, beyond your own word, that this youth is really the Prince *Hezzar Mushkil* ?”

The ambassador, at this question was overtaken with confusion, for in truth beyond the credentials of which he was the bearer and which only proved his own identity, he could give no proof than his word. But the *Dedeh* who was quite alive to all the proceedings, the moment she heard the question of the grand-vizier, exclaimed :

“ Proof do you want, I’ll give you proof if he has not the mark of a bow and arrow stamped on his breast, which I say he has, then he is not the son of the King of Bukhara. Light of my eyes,” she exclaimed to the Prince, “ open your vest and shew yourself to be what we proclaim you to be.”

Upon this Hezzar Mushkil opened his vest and there, true enough, was seen the stamp of the bow and arrows on his breast, and at the sight of which, every one present, from the grand-vizier to the lowest attendant, exclaimed, “ Mashallah ! Praise be to Allah ! Ajaib ! Wonderful ! ” and such like words of astonishment.

As soon as the King of Persia was informed that the culprit, was in truth the son of the King of Bukhara, his conduct towards him underwent a total change. He overlooked the invasion he had made of the sacred precincts of the harem, and did every thing in his power to confer upon him all the honours and distinctions due to his rank. He was straightway taken to the royal hot bath ; his body was washed, perfumed and dressed in the

richest robes from the royal wardrobe, the ensigns of royalty were conferred upon him; bracelets were placed on his arms, a diamond hilted dagger was inserted in his girdle and a tassel of pearls was suspended therefrom. He was then conducted to a magnificent apartment within the royal palace, and there lodged together with the ambassador and his beloved Dedeh. Being seated in his hall of audience on a musnud, he was visited by the grand-vizier and complimented by him in the name of the King, and an hour appointed when he should make his first visit. All the dignitaries of state, in their turns, paid him visits of compliment by command of the King, and even the chief eunuch, who had been so forward in evincing his enmity, now appeared one of the first to make speeches of congratulation.

All this while, the Prince's heart was totally and entirely absorbed by his passion for the enchanting Princess of Persia. Much as he was charmed by his reprieve from death, and by seeing his Dedeh and hearing news from his beloved father, still every joy was absorbed in the hope of again seeing his adorable



Princess, and ultimately obtaining possession of her hand in marriage. He could think and dream of nothing else, and calling Hassan to him, who, from experience, he knew could obtain access to the Princess through the means of her shoe-bearer, he delivered to him a letter, which he charged him forthwith to have conveyed into her own hands.

In this letter, he drew a glowing picture of his passion, and dwelt with rapture upon his hopes, laying himself and a kingdom at her feet, now that destiny had evidently turned over a new page in the book of fate, favourable to his wishes.

The Princess had been dissolved in tears ever since the catastrophe in the garden. She was informed of the fate awaiting her lover, and despair had taken possession of her heart. She accused herself of being the cause of his death, and bewailed, with wringing of hands and loud lamentations, the fatal imprudence which had induced her to see him against all the received decorum of Persian manners, and in direct opposition to those express commands so frequently issued by her

royal father. She was waiting, with intense apprehension, the news of his death, although she had set every engine to work to prevent it, and she was just vowing, in her inmost thoughts, not to survive him, when her principal confidant rushed in with breathless joy to inform her of the event of the ambassador's arrival and of the Prince's reprieve.

The shock produced, on her too sensitive heart, by this unexpected announcement, was too much to bear, and she fainted away through excess of joy. When restored to life, she could not sufficiently enjoy the repetition of the happy news, and did not cease requiring every particular to be narrated, particularly that which related to the establishment of the proof that he was indeed the heir to the kingdom of Bukhara. A lively hope then sprung up in her heart, that she might be united to him in marriage, for here she had found one, in every respect worthy to be her husband, and to whom her father could in no wise object, for the kingdom of Bukhara was almost as great in extent as that of Persia. This hope was confirmed into certainty as soon as she

read the letter from Hezzar Mushkil, which was duly delivered to her by her shoe-bearer. She received it with enthusiastic joy, kissed it a thousand times and read it over so often that she could repeat every word by heart. Instead of wailing and lamentation, nothing but joy now breathed throughout the harem and spies were sent out to watch and report what was taking place at court among the men for the smallest incident was now of importance to the Princess, inasmuch as every event was more or less connected with the well-being of her beloved Prince.

The Shah gave the Prince of Bukhara, attended by his ambassador and suite, a most brilliant and solemn reception. He clothed himself in his most gorgeous robes, adorned his person with all the state jewels, and sat upon his golden throne to receive him. All the great lords and dignitaries of the state were present, and nothing was wanting to make the ceremonial worthy of the national reputation for riches and urbanity. The Prince was admitted to sit upon the very same musnud as the King, and the court poet celebrated the

event by writing a poem of fifty thousand stanzas in length, so that nothing should be wanting to render it a feature of history. As soon as the public audience was over, the Prince demanded a private one of his Majesty, which was granted; and there he set forth in the most glowing and respectful language, how much his heart was inflamed with love for his daughter, and demanded, in express terms, her hand in marriage. The Shah, a monarch full of sagacity, having been made acquainted with the strange and fabulous circumstances which had brought his daughter and the Prince together, concluded that such a romance could not be conducted without the outbreak of love, at once answered that he lived only to make his daughter happy, and that if she were agreeable to the request, he could interpose no objection. At these words, the entranced Hezzar Mushkil fell at his feet with joy and thankfulness, and said that he would await her decision with hope, and abide by it with the profoundest respect.

That decision was not long withheld, and no two mortals ever so effectually seated them-

selves upon the carpet of happiness, as did the Prince of Bukhara and the Princess of Persia. Hezzar Mushkil was not long in returning to his own country, to seek his father's blessing and consent, which having been obtained, his nuptials were celebrated in a manner so sumptuous, that the court poet passed the remainder of his life in writing a poem upon the subject which, however, he did not finish, although he died one of the oldest men in Persia. The old Hemezen, lived long enough to ascertain that the dynasty of Bukhara would not be extinct in the person of her beloved Hezza Mushkil, and, at length, died cheered by the thought that she had been the cause of doing some good in the world. The Prince, having become King, reigned long over a people who blessed him and his Queen, as contributors to their happiness by the exercise of their many virtues.

---

When the Mirza had finished his narrative of the adventures of the Prince Hezzar Mushkil, he assured me that it was wholly and entirely an impromptu. "The Shah, *ilham-*

*Allah!* praise be to Allah," said he, "was pleased, and to say the truth, I flattered myself that I had not done amiss. The best proof of this was that I kept his Majesty awake, and that he only called for his kalian twice during the whole narrative. His Majesty who possesses an hundred sons at least, was wonderfully amused by the account of the unfortunate king who had only one, and every now and then exclaimed, "*bad bakht!* unfortunate! had he sent to me instead of to the Hemezens, I could have sold him several cheap."

"But," said I to my friend, "you have been talking of Hemezens, as if such people really existed. We too in our books possess stories of a nation entirely composed of women, and who are there called Amazons, now as your word Hemezen signifies 'all women,' and leads to the supposition that our Amazon may be derived from it, I beg of you to inform me what may be the extent of your information upon the subject."

"My knowledge," answered the Mirza, "is solely derived from a report and a prevalent

belief, that a nation entirely composed of women was once known to inhabit a remote region of the Caucasus, near Cakhet. I do not myself see how such a nation could exist; for whatever is exclusive degenerates. If relations intermarry, they dwindle into dwarfs; what, then, could a set of women do without husbands? it is a known fact that among the Tartars their women are as much on horse-back as the men; therefore the idea of a nation composed of women might, perhaps, originate in that circumstance."

I quite agreed with my friend in his conjecture, and most true it is that an opinion prevails in the East, and has prevailed for centuries, that a nation of Amazons exists in Asia. This is confirmed by what that quaint and most credulous of travellers, Sir John Mandeville, says on the subject. He writes in the year 1332, and his words are as follows:

"Besyde the land of Caldee is the land of Amazoyne; and in that relme is alle women, and no man; noght, as some men seyn, that men mowe not lyve there, but for because that the women will not suffre no men amonges

hem, to ben here sovereynes. For sum tyme ther was a Kyng in thet contrey, and men maryed as in other contreyes; and so befelle, that the Kyng had werre, with hem of Sithie; the whiche Kyng, highte Colopeus that was slayne in bataylle and alle the gode blood of his rehme. And when the Queen and alle the othere noble ladyes sawen that thei weren all wydewes, and that all the realle blood was lost, thei armed hem, and as creatures out of wytt, thei slower all the men of the contrey that weren left. For thei wolde that alle the women weren wydewes as the Queen and thei weren; and fro that tyme hiderwardes thei never wolden suffren man to dwelle amonges hem, longer than seven days and seven nyghtes, ne that no child that were male sholde dwelle amonges hem, longer than he were noryscht; and thanne sente to his fader. And when thei wil have ony companye of man, than thei drawn hem towardes the landes marchynge next to he; and than thei have loves that usen hem, and thei dwellen with hem an eight days or ten, and then gon home agen. And zif thei have ony knave child, thei kepen it a



certeyn tyme, and then senden it to the fader, when he can gon allone, and eten be himself, or else thei sleen it; and zif it be a femele, thei don away that on pappe with an hot hiren, and zif it be a womman of gret lynage, thei don away the left pappe, that thei may the better beren a scheeld, and zif it be a womman of symple blood, they don away the rygt pappe, for to saheten with bowe turkeys, for thei schote well with bowes. In that lande they have a Queen that governethe alle that land, and alle thei ben obeyssant to hire; and always thei maken here Queen by elec-cioun, that is most worthy in armes. For thei ben right gode werryoures and wyse, noble, and worthi; and thei gon often tyme in sowl\* in help of other Kynge, in her werres for gold and sylver, as othere sowloures don, and thei meyntenen himself right vygouresly."

I communicated my information to the Mirza, who did not seem surprized at any part of Sir John's narrative, but rather contended

\* *Sowl*, hire, *sowlouer*, to keep in pay; *sowlouer*, hence soldier.

that he had confined himself within the bounds of mere facts, and that many more extraordinary things might be said. I assured my companion, that as far as the marvellous was concerned, the ancient knight had sufficiently satisfied my curiosity, and we parted with mutual protestations of regard and with eager hopes of soon again enjoying the pleasure of a meeting.

## VISIT · III.

It was not until the close of autumn, when the first chills from the snowy summits of Alborj begin to make themselves felt at Tehran, and a *pústeen*, or sheepskin cloak may occasionally be seen in the bazaar, that I again had communication with my friend the prince of poets.

The Shah had resumed his winter quarters, having returned from his campaign on the plains of Sultanieh and Ojan, and dismissed his troops to their homes until he again should call for their services in the spring; whilst the court and the city seemed to abandon every care, save that of securing warmth, comfort and sociability during the rigour of the approaching season. The ambassador

having paid his formal visit of ceremony and congratulation to the Shah, during my attendance on the occasion, I met and conversed, for a few minutes, with the Mirza, who promised that we should soon again meet, and hinted that he had devised a mode of increasing the pleasure of our meetings, which he would explain more fully by and by.

Accordingly a few days after, I received a visit from him, and he then informed me that a particular friend of his who had been absent some time from court was just returned. He described him as a man of excellent sense, of much ingenuity, fond of literature, and possessed of such powers of conversation, that he held the important post of King's *Mosaliâ*, or companion, or maker of conversation, and was appointed upon the great daily Selam or court, to answer whatever observations his Majesty might be pleased to make.

This personagé was a native of the city of Merv, of which he was the Prince, and was in every way a nobleman both by birth and dignity of conduct and demeanour. He was fond of the society of learned and literary men, and my

friend informed me, it was his wish that we should occasionally meet at his house, and pass our time in conversation and in relating stories.

To this effect he named a day for our first meeting, and in order that refreshments might not be wanting, the Prince of Merv, for so I will call him, proposed to give us tea to drink made after the manner of the Tartars, who receive it direct from China and freely indulge in its use. In short, we were to have a Tartar tea party in all due form, and I need not say that I was happy to obtain a fresh glimpse of the society and habits of people in every way so interesting.

At the appointed hour on the appointed day, the servant of my friend, the Mirza, came to inform me that all was ready and invited me to the entertainment. I followed him, and alighted at one of the handsomest entrances in Tehran, a gateway arched and painted, duly swept and sprinkled with water, when having been paraded through several large courts laid out into flower beds, straight walks and fountains—I was introduced into a smaller

court, where I found the room in which the Prince received his friends in private. This was already filled with guests. He half rose from his seat as I entered, and pointing to a place near him, I nestled myself between my friend, the Mirza, and a man whom I did not know, a Tartar by his face, with my back against the wall, and my legs well doubled up under me.

Our host was a singularly handsome man, possessing an intelligent eye, an aquiline nose, and a magnificent beard which reaching his girdle, vied with that of the Shah, his royal master, in all the perfection of length, breadth, gloss and fulness. His manners were those of a finished gentleman, and he would have been called such either at the court of Versailles, or at that of St. James's, for I found him easy of access—civil without stiffness, and full of those engaging attentions which tend to place a stranger at his ease.

The assembly, besides the Mirza and myself, consisted of some six or seven persons, some men in office about the person of the Shah, and others the Prince's own countrymen, all

well bred men who had seen the world. Our host was very happy in his mode of making us welcome, and as I was the only one who was really a stranger, being an European and a Christian, and not a Mahomedan like the rest, he seemed particularly anxious that I should feel quite at my ease, and directed much of his discourse to me. He first alluded to the use of tea, which he assured me in his own city and country, was habitually drank. He then pointed out the Tartar mode of making it, and exhibited the apparatus which stood without the door of the room, consisting of a sort of kettle mounted on a stand, which being heated by charcoal underneath boiled the tea mixed with milk and sweetened with sugar, and was then served to us in basins. He appeared to esteem tea principally as a sudorific, and rejoiced as we each drank off our bowl, packed close as we all were, that we should soon feel its wholesome effects. This we did, and the whole company were not long in looking very hot under their beards. But my Mirza turning from the subject of tea, soon called our attention to the object of

our meeting, stating how much I enjoyed oriental fiction, and then remarked that the Prince himself being a depository of a great variety of tales, more particularly relating to his part of Asia, we all hoped that he would indulge us in relating one for this evening's amusement.

"How," said the Prince, "Astafarallah! heaven forbid—what? is your slave to speak, when the father and grandfather of all story tellers is present, the Shah's own poet laureat the prince of verse?—no, that must not be."

Such a compliment to my friend, was speedily returned by another, and thus much time was lost in preliminaries, when at length our host acceding to the general wish, and being, indeed, celebrated for his invention and his easy flow of language, clearing his voice and placing himself in a talking attitude, began as follows:—



STORY OF AZBEAZ THE SHOE-MAKER  
KING.

THERE was once a small kingdom in the very distant parts of Tartary bordering upon China, of which, perhaps, few traces would be found at this present day, its capital city being situated in a plain surrounded by arid mountains. It was governed by a very tyrannical King, an usurper of the throne, who, upon the most trivial occasions, made it his pleasure to exercise great acts of severity in ruling over his subjects, and although he was in consequence much execrated, yet also he was much feared. Many stories are related concerning this King, his capital city, and the surrounding country and mountains, all tending to prove that they were subject to certain agencies, which not being accounted for by natural causes, were looked upon as supernatural, and, therefore, the inhabitants lived in a state of mind always ready to receive and believe any tales, however marvellous.

In the city lived two brothers, men in the middle ranks of life, one of whom was the cause of a great convulsion in the kingdom. The eldest as he grew up was commonly called Sakalchok, or Muchbeard, and the second Asbeaz, or 'little and white,' both designations being derived from their respective beards, for that characteristic of the face being usually scanty in Tartary, men were subject to many remarks whenever there was a variety.

The elder brother being gifted with much beard, and such a gift being greatly prized, became very arrogant, gave himself great airs, despised others, and was particularly hard upon his younger brother, who having but a small quantity of that appendage, and that so white as to be scarcely perceptible, was looked down upon.

The elder brother enjoyed a higher walk of life than the younger, a circumstance which greatly excited his pride, for he was a jeweller and goldsmith, whilst the other was only a shoemaker. In person too they were so different, that it was difficult to make people believe them to be brothers. Sakalchok was a tall well

grown man, with a commanding face, and one who walked, talked, sat, and conducted himself with the airs of a man of importance, whilst Azbeaz was pecuniary ill-favoured and deficient in beauty. His principal deformity consisted in the singular distribution of the features of his face; his mouth was kept constantly open by the projection of his upper teeth, which were so disposed, that whatever might be the mood of his mind, he always appeared to be laughing, and his eyes being sharp, their lively expression confirmed the beholder in the supposition that he was always indulging in that exercise. This peculiarity had been the means of procuring him many advantages in life, as well as many of its miseries, for by this laughing face, the emblem of good humour, he acquired a corresponding reputation, whilst it also involved him in many a scrape, being frequently accused of laughing out of season. In addition, he was deformed by a curvature of spine, short crooked legs, and an enormous circumference of hips. Thus equipped, Azbeaz apparently started in life with much greater disadvantages than his

brother, but the excellence of his temper and disposition rendered him, in truth, a happier man—he was humble, always ready to oblige, and prone to generosity, whilst Sakalchok lived in the persuasion that all mankind, and his brother in particular were bound to acknowledge his superiority and to bend to his decisions.

Sakalchok occupied one of the most respectable jeweller's shops in the goldsmith's bazaar, where he kept several apprentices at work; whilst his dwelling-house, which was full of luxury within, although it presented but a mean appearance without, was situated in a handsome quarter of the city.

Azbeaz's shop stood at the meeting of four streets in the great bazaar, called Chahar Sou, and there he worked alone at his trade with his own hands, for his dignity among shoemakers was scarcely above that of cobbler, whilst his dwelling-house lay in the outskirts of the town, and consisted of a few mud built rooms enclosed within a sorry wall which encircled a small court-yard. Azbeaz, was in truth, a merry fellow at heart, although

he had much to complain of in the conduct of his brother, who although he took no notice of him in the world, was glad to get his shoes made by one whom he never deigned to pay.

The progress of the elder brother through life had been one of unchecked prosperity—from small beginnings he gradually had enriched himself, having made capital hits in the purchase of precious stones—was celebrated for his taste in setting them, and could design and chase flowers on gold and silver in a manner unrivalled by other artists; so great was his fame, that he was now bidding fair to become the court jeweller.

Azbeaz, on the contrary, had endured many vicissitudes, which had been the means of forming his character into that habitual resignation prescribed by his law—many of his mishaps had arisen from the cast of his face, for even during his boyhood he had received many an unmerited beating for supposed laughter.

His father who was a tanner, insisted upon his becoming a shoemaker in order that he

might thus create a purchaser for his leather, although Azbeaz himself had a turn for letters and longed to be a mollah.

He had once been nearly put to death for being supposed to laugh when the people had received orders to mourn for the King's death, and at a funeral ceremony where he had been invited to do honour to the dead by a sad countenance, his obstinate muscles were so obnoxious, that he was turned out of the house as a pestilent fellow. His reputation for good nature was the cause of much misfortune, for his creditors were always backward in their payments, whilst those to whom he was a debtor had no compunction in urging their demands. In short, he scarcely ever passed a day without feeling the inconvenience of his face and disposition.

His brother had long been married, a state to which Azbeaz also aspired, but without success. Although his back was crooked, yet nature had endowed him with a tender heart, and, moreover, with a great admiration for beauty. By chance, he once had the satisfaction to obtain sight of the face of a neighbour's

niece, a most beautiful maiden of sixteen, and from that moment he determined to leave no stone unturned until he obtained possession of her hand.

Without apprehension concerning his own looks, he immediately assumed all the air of a lover. He endeavoured to coax his grin into a look of despondency, he made verses, and even went the length of cutting and maiming his body before the windows of his adored in order to attract her attention. But what he most required, and which he knew would soften the hearts of her relatives was money; with that he hoped to dispel every difficulty, for having discovered that his first overtures were unsuccessful, he began to suspect that a crooked spine and an ugly face might prevent the intrusion of love into a maiden's breast, and therefore concluded that, perhaps, it might be softened by the lure of gold and the fascination of finery.

Azbeaz was poor, although had he regularly received the fruits of his industry, he would have been above want. One of his principal debtors was his brother; to him, therefore, he

determined to apply, stating the object of his application, and, moreover, considering the urgency of the case, he hoped, that he might induce him to advance the loan of an additional sum which he would faithfully promise to discharge in shoes.

When he had made known his demand, and the reason thereof, his brother broke out into a taunting laugh, and exclaimed : " Praise be to Allah, the world is turning upside down, Azbeaz is going to be married !"

" And why should he not," said Azbeaz, " is he not a man like the rest of God's creation? are maidens and wives made for others, and is he not to have one also?"

" I am not aware he is counted amongst men," answered Sakalchok with renewed contempt. " Has he not a hump? Has he not the face of a monkey? Has he not the soul of an inferior animal? Is he then to be placed among men?"

" And you are a brother who say all this!" retorted Azbeaz with a mortified and dejected countenance, " we came from the same mother



and were nourished by the same breast, and if so, are you to be counted among men?"

"Man!" exclaimed Sakalchok, "come you here to insult my beard?"

"I am come here," said Azbeaz with more spirit than he was wont to speak to his brother. "I am come here to seek my own—pay me what you owe me—if you refuse to help me in securing my happiness in a wife, I pray you give me that which you cannot withhold—I am in want of my money and must have it."

"Must! must, indeed!" exclaimed the arrogant Sakalchok, "a miserable cobbler use such a word to the King's jeweller; we shall see where must is! get you gone—say nothing more—get you gone—must, indeed!"

"I demand my money," said Azbeaz with still more spirit, "I am a poor cobbler and you a rich jeweller, still greater is the necessity that you should pay me—let alone the claims of a brother."

"I have no money for such as you," said Sakalchok, "if you have made shoes for me,

great has been the honour conferred upon you."

Azbeaz could not look grave if he wished it, his laughing mouth prevented that, but on this occasion hurt as he was by his brother's conduct, particularly as it checked his love, he gathered himself up into an attitude, which would have been one of dignity had it been adopted by a well-made person, and lifting up his hand said:

"Whatever I am, God made me, and deformity is no fault of mine, and you can no more prevent yourself being my brother than I can being yours—but from this hour, I dissolve the bonds of our relationship, and I treat you as one possessing no tie upon me. If there be justice to be had at the foot of the throne, Azbeaz will seek it."

Upon which he flung himself out of the room, whilst his ears caught the sound of his brother's laugh of contempt, followed up by a shout of defiance.

It was some days after this disappointment, before Azbeaz could hold up his head, but the ardour of his love was so great, that he

could not restrain himself from doing something. Accordingly he got acquainted with an old confidential slave belonging to the family of the maiden he adored; and, in consequence of the questions which he put to her having learnt some particulars favourable to his passion, he determined to take some step towards furthering his suit.

The slave informed him that the mother was anxious for her daughter's marriage—the father being dead, she was under the guardianship of her uncles—that the girl herself was not disinclined to marry, and that she did not know of her being promised to any one. With these facts before him, the enslaved Azbeaz determined to press his suit with the mother; he became acquainted with her, invited her to his shop, softened her heart by presenting her with shoes—offered fruit and sweetmeats, in short, he played his cards so well, that he at length was emboldened to state his pretensions. The mother heard his proposals with delight—for what mother was ever displeased on such an occasion? and recommended him to see the elder uncle, with

a request that he would call a meeting of the family, before whom he would lay his case.

To all this, Azbeaz with joy readily assented. In the meanwhile, the mother instigated her brother-in-law to go to Sakalchok with whom he was well acquainted, to enquire what might be the circumstances of Azbeaz, with a view to furthering the marriage of her daughter.

When Sakalchok received this application, the whole malignity of his humour burst forth; he branded his brother with unjust appellations, laughed aloud at his pretensions as a swain, asserted that he had not ready cash enough to settle even the smallest dower upon a wife, and strongly urged the mother of the maiden and her uncles, of whom she had several, not to give their consent to Azbeaz's proposals. The words of Sakalchok, were words of no mean personage, for he was now the King's principal jeweller and goldsmith, and consequently they were heeded with considerable respect. The uncles avowed themselves disgusted at Azbeaz's impertinence in venturing to make a proposal, and espousing

the opinion expressed by his brother, the determined to give him a piece of the minds on the subject.

Azbeaz waited with impatience for the meeting. At length the morning came and he proceeded to the house of the oldest uncle with a beating heart. The father of the maiden had been the youngest of six brothers and died an oldish man, consequently there were five old men collected to receive Azbeaz. When they were all seated, he opened his case by stating his desire to possess the daughter of his former neighbour as a wife. He honestly avowed that he was not rich, but pleaded that he enjoyed the confidence of a good set of customers; and appealed to all those who knew him, whether he was not capable of maintaining a wife in comfort, by the industry of his hands, and the temperance of his habits.

The youngest uncle answered this speech by a sneer; "and so," said he, "you, a poor shoemaker, ugly, with the face of a monkey, with a curved back, without goods and chattels, or property of any kind; you venture to seek our

niece in marriage, she who has beauty enough to wed a khan—a bey—or even a king's jeweller. Are you mad enough to come laughing at our beards in this manner?"

"Mad indeed!" exclaimed the next youngest uncle, "in what part of your understanding did you find that men were such fools, as to be taken in by a deformed cobbler?"

"A deformed cobbler did you say," continued the third uncle, "if that were all, there is no harm done, but what did the king's jeweller, your own brother say? why that you were as insolent as you were ugly, and went about insisting for money as if you were the King."

"Money did you say!" exclaimed the oldest uncle but one, "what money can a cobbler ever make, sufficient to support a comely creature like our niece, who might aspire to marry a vizier's son."

"A vizier's son! what say you?" said the eldest uncle, "is she not fit to be placed in the King's harem? then, wherefore, are we wasting our time in talking to a poor shoemaker, and listening to his insane proposals; let him think himself well off if we do not take him by the

waistband, and throw him into the street for his impertinence."

Azbeaz, during the five speeches with which he had been regaled sat boiling with rage and indignation, although his face was true to its old laugh. When he had heard them out, he slowly arose, and as he walked out of the room, he said, "the day will come, old gentlemen, when you will cry out—*amán—amán.*"

The five old men lifted up their voices and hooted him out of the house, and when they had sufficiently applauded each other for their spirited conduct, dispersed to their respective homes.

Azbeaz dispirited, abashed and enraged, returned to his stall and endeavoured to dispel the gloom of his mind by occupying himself with his work. He determined to make more shoes than ever he had made before, for as the history of his unfortunate love had got abroad, he proposed by assiduity to business, to keep himself out of the way of the scorers and deriders, who would not fail to assail him.

It has been said at the beginning of this history, that the city of which Azbeaz was an

inhabitant, not only was governed by a tyrannical King, but also was subject to certain agencies which not being accounted for by natural means were looked upon as supernatural. The state of the case is as follows : in the centre of the royal palace, a tall and ancient tower reared its head, one side of which was contemplated with pleasure, the other with awe and apprehension. On the side towards the plain, was suspended a large gong, made of a metal so musical and sonorous, that whenever it was struck, the sounds were harmonious. That event took place upon all occasions of joy and festivity; when a prince was born, it was struck; when the royal arms had gained a victory, it resounded far and wide; when the Shah was in good humour, it made itself heard; when good news of any sort were reported, the same was announced by the sounding of this exhilarating instrument, and thus the public joy was decreed and graduated in the most convenient manner. But on the side looking towards the mountains, there existed another larger gong, with one immense knocker suspended over it by an iron chain. This instru-



ment if ever sounded was the certain harbinger of some dreadful public calamity ; when a King died it was heard, or when he had put on his bloody red robe, as a signal for cutting off heads, it was heard ; and then it was struck by the hand of man, but never in the recollection of the oldest inhabitant had it ever been sounded by the great knocker suspended by the chain. Whenever this happened, according to the current tradition, it was supposed to be done by some supernatural agency, and the sound which the instrument then emitted, was said to be so loud and terrible, that vibrating through the city, making houses shake and men's hearts to quake, it was heard far and wide throughout all the surrounding region and caused a universal tremor and apprehension. The sound alluded to was sure to be followed up by some dire calamity of rebellion, war and bloodshed, was supposed to be directed against the King's safety, and was always expected to occur when his cruelties and extortions became too great for the people to bear. Whenever its ominous sound was heard, there existed a standing order from the

King to all the generals and officers commanding troops throughout the kingdom, immediately to call out their detachments and without delay march to the seat of government. In the city itself, every inhabitant capable of bearing arms, in addition to the troops in garrison were ordered to arm and be in readiness to act. This great gong, in many cases, acted as a salutary check upon the King, and kept his turbulent passions in order, but the actual monarch was beginning to make himself independent of its fears, and it was the fashion among his courtiers and flatterers to laugh at its powers as an old woman's tale, as a bugbear only fit to frighten children. The consequence was, that the King was very cruel and never refrained beating his subjects whenever it so pleased him.

Azbeaz's shop as said before was situated in the *Chahar sou* at the crossing of four streets in the bazaar, immediately opposite to four stepping-stones, placed there for the convenience of foot passengers, when the gutters had overflowed and the water covered the street. The shortest road to the great

mosque whither the King was wont to resort, passed close to Azbeaz's shop leading through the four stepping-stones. Not very long after the occurrence we have related of Azbeaz's visit to the five old men, when he was diligently at work, the King was announced by the heralds, who made way for his passage to the mosque. It so happened that the waters were more than usually out and almost covered the stepping-stones, when apparently to the cobbler's ill-luck, the King's horse in passing them, stumbled, fell and threw his Majesty over his head. This caused a great commotion, every body ran, many were pleased, Azbeaz stood up to see the result, but well for him had it been had he kept aloof, for his face unfortunately met the King's eye, as he arose dripping with mud, when all the royal anger exploded in a manner fearful to behold; and then did the poor shoemaker feel the extent of his misfortune in having been gifted with prominent teeth, which made him laugh whether he would or not.

“*Ahi* ill-born! dog's son!” exclaimed the enraged monarch, “is it thus you laugh at your

King? take him and cut his tongue out," he roared out to his guards; "where are the executioners? here beat that child of Satan, till he has not a foot to stand upon."

The order was no sooner given than executed; the unfortunate Azbeaz was seized, his feet thrown into the air, and before he could, by any means, explain that the fault was not his, that he really did not laugh, that nature had made him laugh whether he would or no, his feet were beaten into one great and cruel wound. The King's wrath being appeased by seeing one in a more deplorable plight than himself, proceeded to pray at the mosque, leaving his victim on the ground scarcely able to crawl and half dead from excess of pain. No one would venture to approach and help him; still in his pain, his obstinate mouth would look as if he were pleased, and thus whilst he repressed pity, he felt more than ever the entire desolation of his fate. Those who knew him; passed by on the other side wagging their heads; those who had enjoyed his jokes, or had partaken of such hospitality as he could

afford, afraid of incurring the King's wrath kept aloof and said nothing.

There was only one, a youth belonging to the King's body-guard, who late in attending his duty, was riding by in haste to join the royal cortege, when he perceived the wretched Azbeaz stretched out on the side of the road writhing with pain. Impelled by no other motive than feelings of pity for the sufferings of a fellow-creature, he straightway dismounted from his horse, and with soothing words, heedless of all consequences, helped him to crawl to his shop, and having procured relief to his mangled feet, he remounted and pursued his course, promising to return again. Such conduct could not fail exciting the approbation of all who witnessed the act, and as he rode off, he heard the consolatory words *barikallah* and *mashallah* frequently repeated, but he did not remark the scowling eye of one dark and malignant man, who with the heart of a demon had marked him down for punishment, and it was not long ere returning to his quarters, that he was seized by the King's orders and

thrown into confinement for having thus publicly brought into contempt the royal ordinance. It need not be said after this, that Asbeaz in vain expected the re-appearance of his benefactor; but in spite of want of assistance, his wounds healed and before many days had elapsed he was again seen at his stall.

As he sat hard at work on his bench, his eye was frequently directed towards the stepping-stone which had been the cause of his late misfortune. It had nearly served him the same trick several times before, for oftentimes when people stumbled over it and observing his extraordinary face near at hand, they invariably laid their mishap to his evil eye. Suddenly, a thought struck him, "never shall that accursed stone be the cause of a similar misfortune again," he said to himself; "if I am what I mean to be, I will not rest until it be removed, and by Allah," he continued musing, "I will remove it myself. Oh, that I could see that noble youth again who came to my assistance, I am sure he would help me."

After much thought, he at length determined

to do the work himself. The bazaars being locked up at night and delivered over to the care of watchmen, who keep watch on the roof, Azbeaz settled in his mind, that instead of leaving his stall at sunset, he would merely appear to shut it as usual, but remain within, when being supplied with a mattock, a spade and a light, he hoped to transpose the obnoxious stone unseen. Accordingly, having procured the necessary implements, at nightfall as usual he closed his stall, but managed unnoticed to remain within.

At the proper time, the bazaars being closed and the watchmen placed, he made preparations to commence his task. A dead stillness reigned throughout the vast building, and Azbeaz although employed in performing a task apparently of no great importance, felt as if he were about to engage in something criminal. He waited until an advanced hour when he knew the watchmen were least likely to be awake, and then fell too with his mattock and spade. The delinquent stone was the most prominent of the four and firmly planted in the ground.

“Allah send thee misfortunes!” said he, as he struck the first blow.

He worked with much ardour until the perspiration fairly burst from his brow, but to his dismay, he found the stone deeply embedded in the ground, and adhering with more pertinacity than he expected. At length, he came to its base, and then he redoubled his activity, for he thought he perceived something more than earth—in fact he observed a shining substance—a few more blows of his mattock brought to light a small iron door with a handle affixed to it. Curiosity now impelled him, but ere he ventured to lift up the door, he suddenly arrested himself with this question—should it be a treasure what am I to do?—Shall I fly or proceed?—He could check himself no longer, but at once opening the door, which creaked from rust, instead of a golden treasure, he merely discovered a large key. Having taken it into his hand, by the light of the lantern he discerned written characters upon it, which with much difficulty he decyphered (for Az-baez was a good scholar) and found them to say, ‘Follow me.’



“How is this?” said he, “follow a key—what can it mean?”

Holding it in his hand, to his surprize he felt it communicate a pressing forward movement to him, as if some one were inviting him to proceed in a particular direction. He placed it on the ground, as a thing that might be alive; but there it lay inert—taking it up again, the same impelling motion was felt, and he remained utterly astonished. He kept repeating to himself the words ‘follow me,’ until he was weary of conjecture. At length, he bethought himself of proceeding a few steps in the direction to which it pressed forward, and true enough as he walked the pressure increased. His surprize was now overwhelming.

“Allah! what shall I do,” he exclaimed ever and anon, quite uncertain what course to pursue.

The time he passed in incertitude and conjecture had carried him on unawares, till he perceived the dawn of day peeping through the apertures in the roof of the bazaar. He then fell to again to replace the stone in its former state, for he had not time to give it a

new position, when he heard the watchman opening the gates. In this dilemma, he took up the key and leaving his work unfinished, followed the impulse it gave him. The faster he walked, the stronger the impulse, until having quitted the bazaar, he proceeded towards the gate of the city, which was at hand, and which also was opened at the same time as the bazaar, and once having passed through it, he found himself in the plain, with his face towards the mountains. It was then that the pressure of the key became most strongly manifest, and, indeed, it might be said, to be so urgent that it would not allow him to delay. He found himself making his way across the plain in a manner most miraculous. Nothing stopped him. He went over every impediment with an ease that astonished him, his legs seemed to have acquired new life, his lungs played with renewed freedom in his breast. He seemed to be running a race, and bounded over hedge and ditch, rock and thicket with the agility of an antelope. In his course, Azbeaz possessed just enough wit to ask

himself this question. Is this me? he found himself approaching the mountain with fearful velocity and then this apprehension shot across his mind, 'when I get to its base what shall I do? I cannot leap over a mountain! But every step conducted him nearer—the key carried him on with a swiftness that took away his breath and almost lifted him off his legs. At length, he perceived a break on the surface of a dark mass of metallic looking rock, and immediately round a projection, he saw an immense door imbedded in the stratum, and also, what he soon ascertained to be the termination of his miraculous journey, a key-hole. He then without apprehension pressed forwards, and ere another minute had elapsed, the key flew straightway into the spot prepared for its reception. But what tongue can hope to describe, the astounding effects produced by this consummation? of a sudden a sound was heard to ring through the air like the clashing of thousands of metallic meteors, a sound that seemed to make the mountains shake, which reverberated in echoes through the vallies and drove the impending rocks from

their foundations—a sound which appeared to annihilate the existence of every living thing, causing the current of the blood to stop and paralysing the stoutest limbs. The beasts of the field ran to and fro in wild desolation—birds clustered together for protection—the wild animals in the wilderness grew tame with apprehension. Azbeaz at the appalling sound grew faint and trembled throughout his frame, but when, at the same moment, he beheld the grim and portentous looking door fly open with a crash, such as nothing human could conceive, the poor wretch at once fell to earth, lost in a trance that looked like death. And there we must, for the moment, leave him to see what took place in the city.

The day had set in with a sultry and oppressive feeling in the air, which made men imagine that something extraordinary was about to happen. A strange commotion had taken place in the bazaar at the discovery of the displaced stepping stones, and particularly at the sight of the small iron door and cell within which the key had been deposited. Every sort of surprise was afloat. Some of the oldest

citizens shook their heads and said, 'something must happen.' A very old man came forwards and asserted that he remembered the fixing of these stones, and that much mystery had been observed on the occasion. The half open state of Azbeaz's stall was remarked, then the suspicious mattock and spade, and when their owner came to claim them, it was clearly ascertained that Azbeaz was the man who had deranged the stepping-stones. Instantly a search was instituted, the watchmen were questioned, no one could account for his absence, and great curiosity was excited.

The King, as usual at noon, was seated on his throne in his Hall of Audience, holding the great selam. All the great officers of state were present — the King's appointed flatterer and public haranguer was on that day in great force, and had been more than usually happy in the terms of his adulation. He had expatiated much upon his favourite theme, the omnipotence of Kings, and that day had hit upon a new idea, with which he seemed to be greatly pleased, although the royal

countenance, like a blind man who does not know what passes around him, so long accustomed to receive adulation, exhibited no outward expression of pleasure.

The flatterer said, that when a King was born, the stars gave each other the wink, and exclaimed as they shook with joy in their orbits, now let us put our heads together to make his reign fortunate, and should there by chance be an evil disposed mind in the kingdom, the moment the royal eyebrow (which was always under the especial care of the stars) was once shaken, it was seen to produce that powerful awe in the mind, which made it instantly forsake its wickedness.

"Kings," he exclaimed, "thus protected, can have no fear. They are above apprehension—all nature works for their well-being, and no event ever takes place which does not make them feel their superiority over all other mortals."

These words had scarcely escaped the flatterer's lips ere the terrific crash of the great gong was heard. Consternation and tremor overtook even the most stout-hearted—the

weakest fell on their faces in dismay, while an universal shout of apprehension was heard to lift itself into the air. The King, who not a minute before had been upheld as independent of all exterior events, was the first to fall from his throne, and be cast down in a swoon. Nothing was ever more pitiable than his abject state—a state which gave the lie in its fullest extent to the flatterer's words, for on this awful occasion he was as much unheeded as the meanest of God's creatures, all being intent on self-preservation, and none having either the power or the inclination to go to his succour, when all seemed doomed to undergo one destiny.

The consternation was not confined to the court, it was felt instantaneously throughout the city. The vibration caused by the overwhelming sound was felt in every house, throughout the streets, the bazaars, the market-places—all the inhabitants remained transfixed with awe, and no one had wit enough, at the moment, to reflect whence came so sudden a convulsion.

At length the vizier, who was a man of

serve, having somewhat recovered his self-possession, arose from his place and proceeded to give help to the prostrate monarch. Raising him up and placing him against the cushions of his throne, he said :

"The hour is at length come when the *Zalilah*, the shadow of Allah upon earth, must become a substance. Let us arm and be ready, for the great prophecy is about to be accomplished."

"Dog!" exclaimed the King, having had time to look around him to remark that all was safe, that no man was hurt, and that his power was undiminished; "dog! what words are these? The King is above all prophecy! Call hither the priests, and let them inform us what is the meaning of this consternation, and let us arm to be ready for whatever may happen. The Shah is not a man to give up his throne for an old woman's tale!"

The vizier, who was the depositary of the many traditions relating to the great *gung*, having heard the King's words, said no more, but went to his seat at the royal gate to give the necessary orders for arming the



people. He collected the heads of *tens*, hundreds and of thousands, and ordered them according to the rules of the kingdom, to be in readiness to march at a moment's notice for the tradition of old was, that when the gong sounded towards the mountain, armed men should be called to issue from the city.

As soon as the inhabitants had, in some measure, recovered from the shock, they prepared to encounter disaster, but of what kind no one could tell. All was confusion and dismay, but every one agreed that the decrees of fate were imperative, and mankind must be prepared for the event.

In the meanwhile, the King collected together the priests, the astrologers and the wise men, and from them he enquired how in their wisdom they interpreted the event that had just occurred. In his inmost heart, he felt all that which usurpers are likely to feel when there is a chance of their pretensions to the throne being disputed, and had he spoken the truth, would have made but a sorry apology for himself; but he was a politic King, although cruel and pusillanimous. The priests, the

astrologers and the wise men having bowed themselves down before the King, the head of the law, an aged and reverend man, took upon himself to answer his royal master's question. Impelled by the urgency of the case, he lifted up his voice with the courage of one who tarries upon the brink of eternity.

"O King," said he, "may Allah take you into his holy keeping, for the time is now come when there can be no trust but in his mercy. Tradition and the sayings of wise men handed down to us from our fathers, inform us that when the great gong on the turret shall sound as it has done to-day, it announces great and dire disasters. What they may be is entirely in the hands of fate, but your slave will not conceal from your Majesty that such miseries are specially directed against cruel and unjust governors, and long has it been said that in the fullness of time, the throne of this kingdom will return to its proper owner. Such, oh King! are the sayings of the ancient wise men."

"So is it!" exclaimed the king, his eyes flashing fury, although he felt a sinking at the

heart which gave an unsteadiness of purpose to his whole frame. "Old man! dog! is thus you speak to your sovereign? After we are a King. Have we not armies at command? have we not generals? is there lack of money in our treasury? why do you throw unmeaning words into the air?" He sat for some time premeditating a dreadful oath, and plotting in his brain a cruel punishment for the head of the law, the priests, astrologer and wise men, when a herald, his face pale with terror, was seen running headlong through the courts and allowed to make his way to the King's presence. His sudden appearance arrested the cruel intentions circulating in the King's mind, and drew his attention into another channel. "What is this?" exclaimed his Majesty as soon as he perceived the herald, catching at the same time the infection of his fear. "Are ye mad? What want of respect is this? Speak, oh little man!"

"By the salt of the Shah," said the herald, "I have seen a strange thing."

"What thing have you seen?" said the King, with increasing impatience.

"As I stood on the turret of the gate looking towards the mountains, I first saw a great dust and then a black speck on the plain, that speck has been increasing, and is spreading itself wider and wider. I cannot say what it is, but by the soul of the King, I became frightened and ran hither."

"The man is mad!" said the King. "Locusts appear first a mere speck and then spread. Is the fool come to laugh at our beards?" Again he was about to order a cruel punishment, when a superior officer arrived and exclaimed with increased terror, that the peasants were flocking in from the fields in dismay, asserting that an army was approaching, and that no time was to be lost in closing the city gates. Upon this the King became visibly agitated, whilst the wise men might have been seen to smile, the smile of reproof. Instantly orders were dispatched into every quarter of the city to collect the troops, whilst the King betook himself to the high tower in his palace, which commanding a view of the surrounding country, there he hoped to ascertain, with his

own eyes, what might be the state of affairs in the plain.

We left Azbeaz in a trance extended before the gate of an immense cavern. He lay there for some time, when gradually recovering his self-possession, he opened his eyes and observing the surrounding objects felt that he was called upon to do something more than look about him. He proceeded cautiously towards the gate and straightway entered the mysterious cave, composed of rocks, so black and shining, that the whole seemed as if it were of iron ore.

At first, so dark did everything appear, that his eye could discern nothing but one undefined mass of impenetrable gloom, but having stood a while, little by little he discovered that the cavern was subdivided into an infinity of minor inlets, seemingly avenues into its deepest recesses—he walked forward to a large prominent stone in the centre, and having placed his foot upon it, of a sudden he heard a loud ringing noise as if of armour falling, when to his utmost surprise and apprehension, he be-

held at the orifice of each subdivision of the cavern, men clad in complete armour, prostrate on the ground, and arrayed behind them, he beheld a succession of grisly faces, apparently the heads of columns of troops prepared for a march.

The bewildered Azbeaz could neither think nor speak from excess of astonishment—he had no nerves for the encounter of magicians or enchanters, and when he saw the servile devotion of the prostrate men before him, he shrunk within himself as one who feels unworthy of unmerited honours.

He had not stood very long, when an immense colossal figure clad, from head to foot in shining steel advanced from a deep recess, and placing one knee to the ground, in a voice of humility said, “we the slaves of the key salute thee, oh King! we come to do thy bidding, to put down cruelty and oppression and to uphold merit.”

When raising himself up, an iron litter was brought forward, upon which Azbeaz was invited to sit, and thus he was marched forward

followed by bodies of men all clad in black armour, bearing shields and wielding lances, and making collectively a mass that looked like a column of polished iron.

The army thus headed by Azbeaz though small, was compact as the ore it represented, and as they emerged from the cavern, took the direction of the city. They marched in solemn silence—not a word was spoken, nor was a sound heard save the heavy tramping of the troops and the clashing of their armour. When they had got within sight of the city, the column began to extend itself and exhibit a larger front. Azbeaz all this while sat immovable in his iron litter, waiting with patience the result of this extraordinary adventure, but lost in surprise at the strangeness of his position.

The King in the meanwhile had reached the summit of the tower before the army had extended its front, and when he perceived the smallness of its size, he took confidence and laughed the supposed danger to scorn. The flatterers by whom he was surrounded encouraged him to believe that the whole was child's play, and that no sooner would his troops appear in the field than the invaders would disperse.

The grand vizier in person having headed the troops, ordered the gates to be thrown open and advanced to meet the coming foe. The King became a degree more alarmed, when he perceived the army extending its front; but when he saw the great number of his own troops, he again resumed confidence and feigned a scornful laugh.

The conflicting armies were now fairly drawn up in array before each other; and strange to say, ere the grand vizier had given the word of command to attack, the sword of each of the royal combatants was unconsciously drawn from its scabbard, and suddenly seen to fly through the air, and making straight in the direction of the invading army, become attached with the adhesiveness of wax to the shields of their opponents.

The ringing sound produced by this extraordinary concussion was heard far and wide, and inspired terror and dismay in the disarmed troops, whilst it became the signal for the renewed forward movement of the invaders. Magic and magnetism were here combined, and the result was conclusive and instant-



neous. The King's troops without arms, became like a flock of sheep, before a pack of wolves; and fled without hesitation, seeking shelter within the city walls. They entered in utter confusion, creating alarm and desolation by their account of the magic exercised against them, and shewing the inutility of resistance.

The King having seen the performance of the miracle from the tower top, was led away senseless. It was then that the utter pusillanimity of his character became remarkable, and had he been capable of making an observation, he would have commented upon the ingratitude and falseness of men, who so long as prosperity shone upon him remained faithful, but who, the moment reverse ensued, left him alone and unprotected.

The invaders now proceeded in grim array to the very walls of the city, and having conducted Azbeaz in safety to the city gates, which flew open at his approach, he made his entry surrounded by his black escort to the astonishment and wonder of all beholders.

"Is not that Azbeaz the shoemaker?" said they as he passed by with all the circumstance

and power of a monarch. "If it be not him, it is one very much like him, for he is laughing still."

"It is Azbeaz," said a neighbour in the bazaar, who saw him upheld above the crowd, "there is his very cap—there also is his well-known hump."

"By my soul," exclaimed a third, "we shall have a merry monarch if it be Azbeaz, for he never appears but to grin."

The whole city was in a state of astonishment and uncertainty, apprehensive of evil and still looking forward to good.

Those who had caught a glimpse of their new monarch, ran busily with the news to his brother Sakalchok, exclaiming :

"*Mujdeh, Mujdeh*, good news, your brother is King!" whilst he being thus informed, looked bewildered with the intelligence.

"Azbeaz! King!" he exclaimed, "what ashes have fallen upon my head! what becomes of the dirt which I have so long made him eat—whither shall I fly to hide myself? but it cannot be—what words are these? Azbeaz King! no, such a thing was never before

heard of in the world—whatever may happen I will go see.”

Upon which covering his head over with a shawl, and leaving his attendants behind, he glided through the streets to obtain a glimpse of the new King's face.

The five old men too, who had so grossly insulted Azbeaz, began to shake in their shoes. They were afraid to stir abroad when apprized of the astonishing fact, lest seeing any one of them, the injuries he had received at their hands might recur to his recollection. However, when they brought to mind the character of benevolence which he enjoyed, they flattered themselves that among his bad qualities he did not count revenge.

In the meanwhile, Azbeaz on his iron litter upheld above the heads of the surrounding crowd, was born forward by his victorious bands, headed and directed by their colossal chieftain, until he reached the royal palace, the gates of which denoting an expiring effort to save the King, he found closed. But upon his approach, the iron bolts and fastenings by which they were kept together, darted forth,

and afforded an easy entrance. He then was led straightway to the identical golden throne, so recently occupied by his predecessor, taken from his litter, and installed upon it with all the outward demonstrations of respect shewn to eastern Kings on such an occasion. All this while, he, the man Azbeaz, was considering within his inmost thoughts, whether what he was witnessing and experienced in his own person was real, or a dream.

His face exhibited a stolid look of incredulity, although never, for a moment, cheated out of its smile. The only words he said and which he constantly repeated to himself were, "we shall see," as if he were conscious that he had not yet reached the end of his adventures, reserving a final adjustment of himself whenever he should be fixed in his new position; like the cogitation which a man may be supposed to hold within his breast, when falling from a great height—saying this is all very well as long as it lasts.

As soon as Azbeaz was seated on the throne, his resistless protector having drawn up his troops in a line before him, he cast his eyes

around, above and below in utter surprise at the glitter and magnificence which surrounded him, and scarcely could he venture to place himself at his ease upon the costly and luxuriant cushions, embroidered in gold and precious stones, with which his seat was overspread. Wherever he gazed, he beheld emblems of royalty, and grandeurs only to be seen in King's houses, such as paintings, gildings, precious stones, silken hangings and costly carpets. He looked beseechingly around into every man's face, as if he would enquire, are all these things for me?

He had not sat long, before his conductor falling down on his face before him, said; "oh King live for ever. We the slaves of the key have now performed our appointed task, in virtue of which we again deliver to your sublime Majesty the instrument of the power by which we have been enabled to act." Upon which, arising, he drew from his breast the key, and placed it with all due respect before the throne. He then made another prostration, and afterwards in a manner incredible to the astounded and bewildered Az-

beaz, he and his troops disappeared from the courts of the palace, and from the city, leaving the inhabitants to pursue their wonted avocations.

Azbeaz had wit enough to perceive that his whole safety depended upon the possession of the key, which he forthwith placed within the folds of his girdle, until he should have time and opportunity to deposit it in a safer place, and he had scarcely done so, before he perceived himself surrounded by richly dressed men, who stationed themselves in different parts of the court which was spread before the throne.

These were the nobles, the ministers of state, the generals, the men of the law and the courtiers; who having witnessed the miraculous manner in which their country had been deprived of one King, and replaced by another, came to offer all the necessary congratulations on the occasion, and to seek by an exhibition of their loyalty, a renewed installation in their respective situations.

After the due prostrations of body had been made, according to the prescribed forms of

etiquette, the grand vizier stepped forward, and renewing his obeisance, covering over his hands with the sleeves of his cloak and shewing other marks of high respect, said,

“It is right and proper that the meanest of your slaves, by virtue of his office, should inform your Majesty, the *kebleh* of the world, and the asylum of nations, that appointed as your Majesty has been by Allah, and that destiny which rules over mankind, to be our King and governor; it is expedient that the proper forms of installation into the kingly office should be effected in order that we, your Majesty’s slaves, men of the law, men of the pen, and men of the sword, may be enabled forthwith to present your Majesty to the nation and the people of this city, as their lawful sovereign.”

To which speech, there was an universal assent given by the congregated courtiers, by the words *beli, beli,* and *hai, hai,* words which were intended as incense to the foot of the throne.

Azbeaz listened with unfeigned surprise and curiosity to the words of the grand vizier, and

when he had finished his speech, beckoned to him to approach, which being done, he said in a most confidential tone,

"Now as you have a soul, tell me who you are?" said Azbeaz.

"Your slave is your highness's grand vizier," answered the other.

"Now tell me who I am?" returned Azbeaz.

"Your Majesty is our lawful Shah and governor," said the vizier.

"I ask again," said Azbeaz, "I ask you to swear by my beard, which you see is scanty and white, as well as by your own which is thick and black, that you do not lie, and that I am what you really tell me I am."

"Who am I," said the vizier, "that should not swear whatever it pleaseth your Majesty to order—I swear by your Majesty's sacred beard, and by my own unworthy head, that what I have said is true, and that you are now our lawful King and governor."

"I tell you what, friend!" said Azbeaz, after a long pause, "you have eaten a lie! it was but two days ago that I was a shoemaker



in the bazaar, Azbeaz by name—can I have become a King, what words are these?”

“Destiny ordaineth all things for the best in this world,” said the grand vizier. “Allah who can quicken where there was no life, can also make of his living creatures whatsoever it pleaseth him—your Majesty can no more make your sacred person a shoemaker’s then before it could have made itself a Shah.”

“It is hard work to believe all this,” said Azbeaz, “but we will see,” and then in louder words he exclaimed. “Well what am I to do?”

Upon which the chief of the law, the elder of elders, was brought forward bearing the sword of state, which according to the old forms was to be buckled on the royal person by his hands, and said, having made his lowest obedience, “In the name of Allah I come.”

“This may all be very well,” said Azbeaz, “as long as no one says no—but where is the other King, he may not like all this, I’ll not be a King as long as I have not got his consent—bring him here and let us see. There is no reason because he beat me un-

justly, that I should owe him a grudge—I'm all for fair play. It is a King's business if he choses it to beat his subjects—it is theirs to obey. Perhaps, I may one day do the like."

Upon this there was a general search made for the late King: he was sought for throughout the palace, in all the courts and apartments of the harem, throughout the city, but no where was he to be found. It was suggested that he might have been carried off by the miraculous iron army, and such was the rumour throughout the city. One, indeed, swore that he had seen him in the iron litter, but whatever was his fate, true it is that he was no where to be found, and when this intelligence was reported to Azbeaz, he no longer made any difficulties, but submitted to go through all the ceremony of installation.

At a fortunate moment, selected by the astrologers, the sword of state was buckled round the waist of the future King by the elder of elders, and when this important event was achieved, loud were the congratulations

of the assembly, but more particularly so were the words of the King's flatterer, who totally unacquainted with the character of the new monarch, exerted every faculty of his brain to invent new strains of adulation. Having made himself quite sure that he was secure from the reappearance of the late Shah, he broke out as follows :

“ Oh wonderful ! oh astonishing ! oh marvellous ! see the good fortune that has been vouchsafed to our nation ; in one day, as Allah is great, in one small moment have its destinies changed, from darkness to light, from the beating of the winter tempest, to the dawn of delightful spring ; from the pestilence of a charnel house to the fragrance of a rose garden. When our necks were all bared to the sharp cutting scimitar, when cruelty and desolation stalked through men's houses, and life was as uncertain as the whirlwind on the plain, suddenly we are freed from such disasters ; joy, peace, and security are brought to us, in the person of our shadow of the Almighty—of our centre of perfection—of our firmament of happy constellations. Oh wonderful ! oh astonishing ! oh mar-

ellous!—see our blessed King—see his glorious person—see his benign countenance. He is, indeed, a King—not the oppressor of his people—not a cruel tyrant—not an avaricious extortioner. No! he lives but to do good, see him when he walks. *Bah! bah! bah!* what grace! hear him when he speaks, oh wonderful! what eloquence!”

Here Azbeaz, who had listened with curiosity, heightened by the smile on his countenance, exclaimed:

“What dirt is that fellow eating? In the name of the prophet! what is he speaking about? Is he mad? If you are talking about me, oh little man, let me tell you, that I don’t stand having my beard laughed at more than other men—that I call things by their proper names—I call a dog, a dog, and you—a fool. It is bad enough to be a King, but I won’t be called names into the bargain.”

This strange speech, so totally unlike any speech that had ever been uttered by an eastern monarch, struck all those who heard it with unbounded astonishment. In a court where

no word of truth was ever spoken, where deceit was taught as a science, where men by dint of experience learnt the value of every false assertion, almost with the same certainty as if the real truth was spoken at once, to hear it announced by the sovereign himself, that things were to be called by their right names, and that he already felt it a burthen to be a King, were facts scarcely credible.

The flatterer learnt that his occupation was gone, and all who lived by deceit concluded that they must begin the difficult labour of becoming honest men.

As soon as every preparation had been made for the ceremony of shewing himself to the people; Azbeaz, with the sword of state hanging upon his thigh, was taken to the open chamber, situated over the principal gate of the palace, looking into the great maidan or public square, and there supported by the grand vizier and the elder of elders standing on either side, he was presented to the wondering multitude.

The astonishment of the citizens upon perceiving Azbeaz's well known face and person was so great, that they could scarcely bring

themselves to go through the necessary forms of prostration and acclamation.

There was one among the crowd who gazed more ardently than the rest at that face, which still shewed its prominent teeth, and bore its wonted smile, and who trembled as he gazed, and that individual was his brother Sakalchok.

Indignation, envy, hatred, contempt, fear and apprehension, and a stricken conscience all assailed the heart of this wretched man by turns. He was incredulous to the very last that it could be his brother, and was constantly exclaiming to himself, "it is impossible! it cannot be," until he was driven out of this uncertainty by the words which he heard repeated around him in the crowd.

"In truth, men say right," said one, "it is Azbeaz, there he is with his beard, little and white, wonderful luck was he born with!"

"Whoever heard of a shoemaker King!" said another, "I shall be a Shah next, who am a tinker."

"I suppose now that he is King, he won't pay me for the wax he bought of me as a shoemaker," remarked a Chandler.

“If he has got a heart,” said a shoemaker “he will do something for those of his own trade, and lower the price of leather.”

So many observations did Sakalchok hear that he could no longer live in the illusion that this man was not his brother.

He then bethought himself what line of conduct to pursue, whether to implore forgiveness, make restitution, and beg for the continuance of his appointment as court jeweller with hope of further advancement, or wait the tide of events and deliver himself over to the decrees of destiny. He finished by doing nothing, but returned to his home a prey to all the torments of uncertainty.

On the way, he met the five old men who sat squatted together in a corner of the bazaar, gloomily consulting upon their probable fate, seeing that they must have incurred Azbeaz's displeasure by the indignities they had put upon him. As soon as they perceived Sakalchok, they all exclaimed, “welcome, welcome—may fortune attend you, your brother is King, may your shadow never be less, give us your advice, the King you know is our

my, we have made him eat dirt—what shall we do to conciliate him ?”

“What do I know ?” said Sakalchok in no manner to answer such unreasonable enquiry.

“Let every man trim his own beard,” said no more and walked on ; the five old men had no time to take offence, but they remained perfectly silent, each wrapt up in their own apprehensions ; and, perhaps, already feeling a certain tingling on the soles of their feet, a sensation well known to those who have ever tasted bastinado.

In the meanwhile, the ceremony of presenting the King to his people having been performed, was as usual brought to a conclusion by the solemn promulgation of the *Atbeh* by the principal crier of the court, with a sonorous voice and most emphatic manner, pronounced the new Shah’s titles. It was called the Asylum of the Universe, the Common Centre to which the whole world looked, the King of Kings, the descendant from the Kings and the origin of Kings.

Shahzadeh listened with patience to the end, and when calling the crier to appear before him, he



said: "Man! do you know what abomination you have been eating? Who told you that I am a descendant of Kings? What words are these? Why without rhyme or reason will you tell lies? I am the son of Mustapha the tanner, who was the son of a barber, who was the son of a bear leader. You'll please to say so for the future, and then lies will no longer arise from the bottom of your throat to make my face blush, and then men will learn that Kings are no more than other men, of the same flesh and blood, all going to the same place, some to good and some to evil."

Words cannot express the astonishment that took place in the minds of all present when they heard this extraordinary speech. "Are we alive, or do we dream? Here is a King such as no one ever saw or heard of. He tells no lies himself, and will not allow others to do so. Another King would have cut off heads had any one dared to hint that his father was a tanner—this one seems to glory in it. Truth of itself is enough to make him noble. Let us see how he will comport himself this day next year."

Azbeaz's principal care, as soon as he had disposed of the ceremony of his installation, was to deposit his wonder working key in a secure place. Accordingly he directed his steps to the harem, that place so sacred to all the inhabitants of the East, and having entered it with due solemnity, he there met with a scene for which he was but little prepared. Never, indeed, had it occurred to him, having gained possession of his predecessors' throne, that he was also destined to possess his wives. He paused and drew back when he perceived the multitude of females awaiting him as he entered the great court of the Anderoon. A long train of magnificently dressed women was marshalled into two lines, through which he was invited to walk, and a band of singers and minstrels went before him, rending the air with songs and with the sounds of instruments. They sang the laudatory airs in which they had been accustomed to praise their former master, in which his person was compared to every thing that was most beautiful, and in which his good qualities

were exaggerated even to the attributes of divinity. Upon his approach, they all knelt down and kissed the ground. His path was spread with rich stuffs and bottles containing sugar were broken before his feet.

Azbeaz, dazzled by the beauty of the women and abashed by the intensesness of the adulation, shrunk with dismay at what he had to encounter. It was but the other day, he thought, that I ventured to woo and was rejected by one daughter of the moon, and here hundreds vie with each other who shall obtain the distinction of a look. But, by my beard, this will never do. "Here, fair one," said he, beckoning to one of the singers who was straining her throat most zealously in his favour, "tell me wherefore do you make this extraordinary noise and say such extravagant things?—are you all mad perchance?"

The slave fell at his feet, and exclaimed: "You are our King and we are your slaves."

"So is it," said Azbeaz, shaking his head at the same time, in doubt. "Well, I suppose it is so, since everybody says it—but because

in the Shah, it does not follow that I am  
be the fool of the country. Prithee, fair  
," he continued to address the minstrel,  
ou have been all singing at the top of your  
boats, and comparing my body to a cypress  
e. Now look at my back, it is as crooked  
a ram's horn; how can you tell such lies?  
en you assert that my eyes are as large as  
se of an antelope. By the prophet, every-  
y knows they are not larger than those of a  
le; and as for my *zuls*, my curls, which you  
ert smell of myrrh and aloes, I have only  
o or three coarse grey hairs belonging  
me, which can only smell of my old sheep-  
n cap. How can you all deceive your-  
ves after this fashion? If I am to be your  
ah, I will not be the King of lies, but the  
ng of truth."

Then calling the head of the eunuchs to  
n, a gaunt negro, with a face of unrivalled  
liness, he said: "If I am to command  
ese women, you may inform them the  
oner they find themselves husbands the  
tter, both for them and me. They are none  
mine. Every man sits upon his own heels,

so let each have his own mate. And as for you, you may go and hang yourself, for your craft is at an end."

Strange was all this in an eastern and much more in a royal harem. The singing, the music and the processions were suppressed, and any jealousy and heart-burning that might exist to obtain the new King's favour were soon crushed. The elder women, however, broke out into downright lamentation, and accused the King of cruelty and injustice ; but to those who had feeling, new life accompanied by hope was opened to them, and they longed to make themselves agreeable to objects more fitted to secure their affections than an ugly shoemaker, though he were a King.

As soon as Azbeaz was left to himself, he took the key from his girdle, and selecting a place in the corner of the room under his own seat, he there deposited it for the present. He then desired that the grand vizier might appear before him, when he spoke to him as follows :

" It is now plain that I am the Shah. God

only knows why or wherefore—but so it is. You are, as you tell me, the vizier, and, consequently, I suppose a wise man. That is not my case. I cannot call myself a wise man, nor although I am the Shah, yet it is as little a consequence of my merit, as it was in consequence of having ten fingers that I became a shoemaker. All things great and small are directed by powers of which we know nothing. Allah is Allah, and whether we will or not, he is still Allah. Now you being the wise man and knowing how to govern a kingdom, you will please to tell me what I am to do from one year's end to another, from morning till night, and from hour to hour. I feel that my time belongs to the country, so does my conduct; therefore, tell me how I am to fill up one and direct the other."

The grand vizier, a self-sufficient personage, squared his elbows and inflated his person, preparatory to giving an appropriate reply to the King's inquiry. He began, as usual, with fine phrases, and having once got well into his subject, he knew not where to stop. First, he despatched largely upon etiquette, upon the science of

rising up and sitting down—upon going out and coming in—upon speech and forms of speech—upon appropriate dress, when the *taj*, or crown, is to be worn, when the cap with the shawl, or when the plain cap—upon the close vesture, short coats and ample cloaks—upon receiving ambassadors, sitting near or far off; in short, so entirely did the grand vizier make it manifest that the kingly office was more made up of precedents and old forms, than of the actual workings of the brain, that Azbeaz cried out, with a long yawn :

“ Very difficult is all this to recollect! If this it is to be a King, I shall never make a good one.” He then stopped the vizier, who would willingly have continued his lecture, and said : “ What you have said is no doubt perfectly right — so be it. However, there is one thing in which I want to try my hand, and that is justice. I wish to try it immediately. You must, in the first place, order my brother Sakalchok, the jeweller to appear before me; in the next, you will send (to a house) which he designated for five old men who live there or thereabouts; and in the

rd, you must discover and bring to me a  
nth, who on the day that I was sorely beaten  
the late Shah, bound up my wounds and  
k care of me. If I am to be a King, let  
try what a King can do."

He had not waited long ere it was an-  
nounced to him that his brother was in at-  
tendance. As soon as Sakalchok appeared,  
fell on his face in the most abject manner,  
having kissed the ground, arose and stood  
in the attitude of one condemned to death.  
Sakalchok having desired him to draw near, ad-  
dressed him in the following words :

We all must bend to destiny, which is  
nothing else than the decrees of Allah, and,  
therefore, I make no apology for being your  
brother, although I am your youngest brother.  
If you behaved as you ought to have done  
when I was in humble circumstances, you  
could not stand before me in the abject,  
and consequently, disgusting position in which  
I now appear. You would have come with  
your nose up and your cap on one side, and have  
been gazed at with respect, instead of which, you  
are looked upon with envy, hatred and malice in your heart,



and concluding that such passions equally possess me, you appear like a criminal worthy of death before me. Shame upon you! As a brother I say this. Now I will speak to you as a shoemaker. Have you brought Sir, the sum of money you owe me? I have made shoes for you and your family for years, and have not received one farthing. Pay me instantly, or otherwise you shall incur the utmost rigour of the law."

Sakalchok, upon hearing these words, became elated, for he hoped by the payment of this debt to be quit of further punishment.

"As I am your Majesty's slave," said he, "whatever your Majesty may order, I am ready to pay. The debt is a poor one, not worthy your Majesty's notice. Let me double or triple the amount. Your slave is ready."

"I only ask for my own," said Azbeaz, "for that which, when I was poor and powerless, you constantly refused to pay me. I know the sum well. It was one hundred and fifty piastres and ten copper coins. I want that and no more."

The trembling Sakalchok with pleasure

counted out the money and placed it before the Shah.

“ Well—this is well. You have now settled the account with the shoemaker ; you have now to deal with the Shah. I am the Shah, and as such, I am the source of justice and the support of what is right. You have behaved as a cruel, unnatural, unjust, proud and arrogant man. Unnatural and cruel as a relation, unjust as a citizen, proud and arrogant in your general conduct. For these delinquencies I intend to reprove you. Your pride must be humbled, you must be taught the miseries of unjust dealing. I, as the Shah, destitute you from your public employment of court jeweller, and I become the steward of all your wealth, as long as it shall seem fit for me to be so. Learn from this what injustice means. You shall forthwith be installed in my shop, and there you may make shoes as I have done. Thus you will learn humility, and know what it is to labour for your bread. Go. I have said it.”

At hearing these words, the unfortunate Sakalchok fell on his face in despair, “ pity,

oh pity," he exclaimed, "forgive me, forgive my past faults—take everything, but spare my money. I cannot make shoes. As your slave is less than the least, he implores you to reflect that he never made a shoe in his life."

"Go—learn!" exclaimed the inflexible Azbeaz, upon which his brother was dragged away, and orders were given that the royal commands should be enforced.

The five old men were next brought into the presence, and even at a distance, the moment they had caught a glimpse of the King on his musnud, they fell to the ground and touched the pavement with their foreheads.

"Come forward old men," exclaimed Azbeaz, "it will be time to humble yourselves when you have heard what I have to say."

They all arose, and covering their bodies over carefully, sidled onward till they stood immediately facing the King, with their heads down, looking more dead than alive.

"Perhaps you will recollect certain words," said Azbeaz, "which I once pronounced in the form of a prediction—neither of us then suspected how soon they would come true; now

had you behaved to me with the civility and kindness which are due from God's creatures one towards the other, what necessity would there be for your present abject condition ; you only invite me to have you well beaten. You stand in the position of curs, which dare not shew their faces out of their own parish ; you avow yourselves to be materials for the bastinado—back to be beaten—old carpets to be dusted ; you might have come before me with your five fingers in the air, inhaling the breath of heaven, with the independance of men who have nothing to fear. You might have put your hands on your hips and thrown your five fingers into my face, had I exacted anything from you unjustly. But as it is, I am the aggrieved man, besides being a despotic King—I can make you pluck out each other's beards hair by hair—make you spit in each other's faces—I can set you begging from door to door, making those whom you have before despised turn their backs upon you and say, 'ha ! ha !'—I could render you miserable old men to the end of your days, in consequence of those words of contumely you taunted me

---

with when I asked you a plain question and made a simple demand. What have you to say for yourselves?—speak first, you youngest old man,” said he addressing himself to the youngest uncle of her whom he sought as a wife, “speak and let me hear what you have to say.”

“What can I say?” said the youngest uncle, stroking down his face with one hand and keeping his cloak well wrapt over him with the other. “I am less than an ounce of dust. The measure of the abomination which I have eaten has long been filled up; whatever your Majesty has said—has, mashallah! been well said. True it is, oh King! we are five wretched old men, we have been biting our thumbs ever since that fatal day, and saying from morning to night, ‘we have made a mistake.’ Forgive us! Forgive us! in favour of her whom you once loved—of her who cries day and night that she has lost her apple.”

“What apple?” exclaimed Azbeaz suddenly softened by hearing his beloved mentioned.

“The apple of her eye to be sure,” answered the youngest old man, “who but your Majesty has she ever loved, or ever can love?”

At these words, Azbeaz appeared still more touched, and the remaining four old men having observed this, corroborated the assertion of the youngest old man by saying,

“Beli! Beli!—yes, yes—he speaks the truth; the maiden is dying of grief and disappointment.”

Azbeaz here made a solemn pause in his proceedings, because the assertion of the old men that he was beloved, opened the channels of his former weakness, and the beauty of her whom he had once so ardently admired, flashed before his eyes with resistless charm.

“If I thought what you now tell me were true,” said Azbeaz thoughtfully, “the whole state of the case would be altered.”

“By the Shah’s soul—by the beard of the centre of the universe—by the crown on his head—by the armlet on his arm,” said the five old men with uplifted voices, “we swear that it is true.”

“How am I to know that it is true?” said the King, “a Shah and a shoemaker are two very different persons, although they may still have the same hump, the same monkey face,

the same prominent teeth, the same beard little and white. Mark that old gentlemen—I will not have the finger of derision pointed at me, recollect I no longer wield the awl, I have sticks and arms at command.”

“ See her—see the maiden herself,” exclaimed an uncle, who now saw an escape from his difficulties. “ Allow her to speak her own sentiments, and if she does not acknowledge herself to be the devoted slave, the grateful hand-maid of her King, then treat us as we deserve ; we are your sacrifice, whatsoever your Majesty ordains—we will say, upon our eyes be it.”

“ Bring her hither,” said Azbeaz, “ and we will see. But mark me, I do not intend to force her inclinations, and should there be any deception, all I say is, open well your eyes.”

The five old men then left his presence, and presently two veiled females were introduced, the mother escorting her daughter. As soon as the room had been cleared, Azbeaz requested the women to unveil, when the well remembered charms of the maiden who had enslaved his heart were revealed to him, as well as the

less attractive features of her mother. Azbeaz would willingly have given his crown to secure the advantages of beauty to himself, and thereby become acceptable to the lovely creature who stood before him; sorely did he feel how little wealth, power and greatness of position had to weigh against individual merit, and when he contemplated his ugliness, he felt that it was not in nature that he could be loved.

"What is this that I hear, thou pearl of beauty!" said Azbeaz addressing himself to the maiden, "is it true that I have found favour in your sight, and that you are willing to make me happy?"

"We are your slaves," exclaimed the mother without allowing her daughter to answer, "we have but one wish and that is to please you. Who is this poor lowly daughter that she should venture to have a will of her own?"

"Allow her to speak," said Azbeaz, "it is not you we want to wed—let the maiden speak. Tell me sugar lips," said he to the daughter, "tell me what are the secrets of your heart,



and whatever they be do not conceal the truth."

"She has no secrets," again answered the mother, looking towards the daughter, fearful lest this invitation to candour from the King might really impel the daughter to speak the truth. "If she has a secret, it is that of loving the King above all things, longing to make the dust of his slippers colyrium for her eyes."

The weak girl feeling the dilemma in which she was placed, having been tutored by her relations to avow her love for Azbeaz, whilst she abhorred the idea of becoming his wife, fell into a nervous state of distressing indecision, the consequence of which proved itself by tears which she could in no wise restrain.

"How is this, fair one," said the King, "is our love to be requited by tears—if my words be pleasing to you, wherefore cry? if not, why do you not speak?"

Upon this the maiden falling on her knees in an attitude of supplication, exclaimed; "pity, pity, I am a poor weak one—I know

not what to do—is it a crime to have loved before I was told to love in the proper place?”

“What words are these?” exclaimed the mother in a rage—“loved before, indeed! how dare you love when the centre of the universe commands otherwise?”

“Hold your peace woman!” exclaimed Sheez, “I want the truth and nothing but the truth—so you have loved before, that is all spoken, if so we have nought to say—we are silent—we praise Allah that we are not the cause of an injustice—no, we have been foolish for in truth, love such as mine, out of a hump and a monkey face is repulsive to beauty as refuse to mix with the limpid stream.”

“Believe her not, asylum of the universe,” vociferated the mother, “she is a perverse and wilful girl—she knows that she loves you, and only persists in her obstinacy to refuse a happiness too great for her, because she gets nothing for nothing.”

“What she has said, she has said,” returned Sheez, “we force no one,” then turning again to the maiden he continued, “perhaps you know

that Kings are powerful men and can do mighty things. Now, if we knew who was this happy youth who was beloved by you, we might be of great use. Speak, the Shah is your friend, though you refuse him as a lover."

Here the maiden fell on her knees and implored that she might be no more questioned. "Your slave," she said crying through her tears, "is a speck of dirt as compared to a mountain—she is nothing—she is not worth your notice—allow her to sit in a corner and not be known—who, or what she likes or dislikes can be of no consequence to any one."

Azbeaz seeing the rage and violence which possessed the mother, insisted upon allowing entire freedom to the maiden to do whatever she found most agreeable to herself, and threatened if he heard of any violence being offered to her, that he would visit such offence with a serious punishment. He could not refrain, however, from upbraiding the mother with the falsehood of her brothers-in-law, and avowed it his intention to visit them with his displeasure.

"What do they suppose," said he, "that a

King is only to sit on his throne in order to be laughed at—no! no! without truth nothing is to be done—with it, all is straight forwards, and many lives to good purposes. Tell them to settle their minds into this conviction, that the Shah will burn their fathers.”

Upon hearing these words, both mother and daughter with much wailing and many tears fell beseeching him to pardon them, requesting him to reflect, that Kings were greater in bestowing mercy than in inflicting punishment. Azbeaz ceded to the prayers of the maiden, for he was softened by her truth and single-heartedness, and promised, that for the present, he would leave her uncles unmolested.

When he had dismissed the women, he then inquired whether the youth who was kind to him in his distress had been discovered, and soon after, to the King's great joy, he appeared and stood before him.

“Come forward,” exclaimed Azbeaz.

The youth took off his shoes, made a low bow and advanced some steps.

“Come up hither,” again he exclaimed.

The youth again advanced some steps, and

entered the very room in which the King was seated.

“Come and sit here,” said the King, pointing to the very musnud upon which he sat.

The youth, with the greatest humility of mien and attitude, did as he was ordered, and when Azbeaz observed the astonishment expressed by those of his attendants who were near, he said :

“It is thus that I treat the man, who dared to show compassion, when every one else expressed contempt—who, unmindful of his own safety, only thought of my suffering, and who by so doing had nothing to gain but all to lose. Such a man is above all value—whatever honour he may receive, can in no wise add to his worth—the only recompense he really can receive is from Allah.”

Upon this he ordered a robe of great value to be thrown over his shoulders, and a diamond headed dagger to be brought from the royal treasury and placed in his girdle. The youth abashed and ashamed at such unheard of distinction, could scarcely give utterance to his feelings of gratitude, at length, falling on his knee before the King he said :

"Why will your Highness sink the heart of a slave into the lowest depths of humility. He is and ever was the less than the least, and since it has been his happiness to meet with the approval of the centre of the universe, it is plain that his good fortune proceeds more from the decrees of fate than from any merit of his."

"Speak no more," said Azbeaz, "we know what we do know, and do that which we approve. Now, as merit is rare, and as there is none without truth, and as I know you have the one, and, therefore, conclude you possess the other, sit down, and without delay relate me your history, for my name is not 'little and white' if I do not make you feel what friendship means."

---

#### STORY OF KHODADAD.

The youth then overcoming his bashfulness, spoke as follows :

"May it please your Majesty, your slave was born under an evil destiny. He is ignorant

who is his father, and what is still more surprizing, he cannot say who was his mother—he is the meanest of God's creatures—he does not know to whom he belongs, by no ingenuity has he been able to discover whence he came—no one claims him, and he has lived by the pure and sole protection of that Providence, who watches over the life and being of those creatures whom he has called into existence. The only relatives I can claim are a family of puppies with whom I was found lying in one confused heap, and I am told, it was difficult to distinguish my infant cries from their earliest yelping. In truth, one summer morning, I was discovered by a negress lying upon a dunghill situated close to the walls of the palace, and almost equi-distant between the door of a mollah's house and that of a well known money-changer. This event was soon known in the *mahal* or district, and as all good Mussulmans were unanimous in the opinion that I ought to be taken care of, such being the injunction in the blessed Koran, it was determined that I should live, but then came the question who was to

assess me? The general opinion was, that I belonged to the house to which I was the nearest when found, therefore, it remained to be decided whether I belonged to the mollah or the money-changer. Neither of these worded, when called upon to exercise the virtues of charity and benevolence, seemed at all pleased at the preference shewn them, and they contended that my interests being the interests of the whole community, saying I was the child of destiny, it was not fair that either of them should be entrusted with the duty of bringing me up—others opposed to this, that it was a great benefit to possess a human creature so circumstanced—it evidently was a gift from heaven, and, therefore, ought to be highly prized—besides a man child was worth a good price in the market at all times, and the expense of rearing would be well repaid by a future sale. After much discussion, it was at length determined that I should belong to him, whose threshold I was the nearest when found, and in order to determine this, it was necessary to come to actual measurement.

---



From the dunghill to the mollah's threshold was fifty-three gez, and to the threshold of the money-changer fifty-two gez, thus, in my misfortune, I belonged to the money-changer by one gez. In the meanwhile, as long as this question was pending, I was running a fair chance of dying from want of sustenance. Wrapt up in the shirt of the negress, a kind hearted slave who belonged to the money-changer, I was crying my young heart out from sheer hunger, and it was only after the difficulty of who was my master was settled, that any demonstrations were made of supplying me with food.

The next question was, how was I to be named. The mollah grown generous from his good luck, said that I ought to be called Khodadad, or 'given by God,' but the money-changer smarting under the burthen imposed upon him, insisted upon my being called Nejes Cooli, 'the slave of uncleanness,' and thus I was issued into the world. This ill-omened name, which marked the feelings of my master towards me, became an excuse for all the future miseries which I was destined to en-

ture. I had fallen into the hands of one of the worst specimens of our nature in the shape of man. There never was installed, I verily believe, so mean a mind in so ill-favoured a body. Avarice was his ruling vice. The love of gold had entirely choked every avenue of good feeling in his heart, and having now, so he flattered himself, expiated every sin by taking me in and adopting me as a child of charity, he felt that he was at liberty to beat me as he chose. He bore on his person all the outward marks of his penurious habits. Long and bony by nature, he became emaciated from scanty food. His haggard face was lighted up by a suspicious eye, that was ever on the watch, and his long skinny hands, seemed to be reserved for no other purpose than to handle gold. He never threw away a thing—he even kept the parings of his nails and the combings of his beard. His room was the deposit of old shoes, and tattered clothes, for he never treated himself to a new caba as long as the old one could hang together.

His household consisted of a wife, a daughter and the negress slave above mentioned. The daughter was an infant when I entered the family, and we grew up together. It is extraordinary that I grew at all considering the small quantity of food that was allowed for my use, but the negress was a kind-hearted creature and she often stinted herself for me: the daughter too, as she increased in stature, proved the very reverse of her father in disposition, for her whole pleasure consisted in giving, and she would rather have starved herself than see me want. As soon as my mind began to expand, the mollah who felt himself in duty bound to contribute to my well being, offered to educate me, and I was daily sent to his little school in the mosque, where I learnt my Alif Beh,\* and where the first rudiments of the Koran were instilled into me. The mollah was a conscientious man, and, therefore, not sparing of his instructions; but as the food for the body which I received from the money-changer was not proportionate to that for the mind which I obtained from the mollah, I did

\* The Arabic A. B. C.

to thrive in either. Indeed, had it not been for the affectionate attentions of Gulchin, the money-changer's daughter, I very probably would have sunk under the miseries I endured. Oftentimes did I determine, as I grew up, to run away in the hope of dying on the top of the mountain among wild beasts rather than to endure the privations I was made to undergo, but I was always prevented by my affection for Gulchin. She grew up in every grace of beauty and mind, and as we advanced in years our hearts became united by ties stronger than those of brotherly and sisterly affection. We soon mutually revealed what we could no longer conceal, and we made engagements to love each other by vows of eternal constancy. It is difficult to say in what capacity I was brought up. I was treated as a slave—frequently as a child of the house, and as I advanced in life, the money-changer placed more confidence in me than in any other human being, although he scarcely allowed me the necessaries of life. I was permitted to accompany him to his smallest of stalls in the bazaar where he carried on his traffic,

and when he was not otherwise engaged, he would teach me the tricks of his profession particularly the art of clipping coin, and of extracting from the black stone on which he tried the purity of the gold which was given him to change, the powder which the metal left upon its surface. I was but a poor scholar, for I had no turn for money making in any shape, but I endeavoured to acquire his confidence, by never losing an opportunity of exerting myself for his interests. At the proper time, I was debarred seeing Gulchin, for she then became a close inmate of the harem, whilst I became a man—but at this juncture, her father died, and to my great grief, I lost the principal charm of my existence, that of seeing and conversing with her. She was conveyed to the house of her uncle, with whom she resided, and it was then with great difficulty that I could communicate with her. My forlorn situation obliged me to abandon all hopes of living near her, for it became necessary to seek some mode of gaining my bread, and the money-changer's brothers, of whom he had many, were neither of them willing

inherit me as a possession. The mollah was my friend, and he, good man, took me into his house, until I could provide myself with a habitation. He possessed an intimate acquaintance in the Mirab, or the comptroller of the waters, an officer appointed by the government to superintend the aqueducts that supplied the city, distributing this necessary of life to the inhabitants according to their wants, and according to the extent of ground requiring irrigation. It was oftentimes a service of danger, particularly in seasons of drought, when the feuds and squabbles, which took place at the opening of the canals were frequently attended by bloodshed. He was in want of an assistant, and my friend the mollah, recommended me for the situation, as one able to read, write and keep his accounts, as well as to attend him in time of need, being a strong and active youth, which indeed I was. Having undergone the Mirab's inspection I was accepted, and soon after installed in my office. I was provided with a spade as an emblem of office, I appeared in attendance upon my master, at the time of the distribution of the waters. I perceived

that I often should be called upon to exercise much inflexibility and resolution, for the gardeners and peasants with whom we had to deal, were a grasping, discontented set always ready to set up claims to more than their due and enforcing them by something more than mere words. I was fortunate enough to acquire the confidence of my master, who having discovered that I could be trusted to manage matters alone, frequently left me to deal with the gardeners and peasants single-handed, and I found that more could be done by kind words and conciliation than by the violent language he indulged in.

I became quite reconciled to my new situation, particularly as it occasionally gave me opportunities of seeing my beloved Gulchin. But I could aspire to nothing more, for what could an unknown youth, poor, without parents, and born a slave, expect? I was not in a situation to marry, besides, I found that her uncles expected to derive great advantages from her beauty, which now became the talk of the city. However, I determined to persevere in my love, seeing that I was loved in

return, and to put my trust in Allah, hoping that destiny might throw something fortunate in our path—and my hopes were soon realized. The ensuing summer proved one of extreme drought, and water became so scarce, that fears were entertained lest the reservoirs would fail us. My master enjoined me to use great precaution in the distribution of the water, and, indeed, all my prudence and forbearance were required to meet the violence with which it was contended for.

One morning in the middle of summer when the heats were raging, and the drought was at its crisis, I went to open the canal, and, to my dismay, so scanty a stream appeared, that I deemed it advisable to foreclose the supply, rather than promote hopes not to be realized.

The gardeners were informed of this, and soon I was beset by a band of fierce men, who demanded their rights in a tone which told me how much their passions were roused, and made me apprehend the worst consequences. I answered in as conciliating a manner as possible, 'That there was no water,



that the springs were dry and the aqueduct useless.'

My appeal was retorted by language the most violent and abusive.

'What dirt are you eating?' said one. 'Are we men to stand by and hear such lies, when our gardens are dying for want of moisture, and ruin staring us in the face?'

'Give us water!' roared out a second, 'or by the twelve Imams, we will burn your father.'

'See this hand!' exclaimed a third, brandishing a dagger, 'I am not a Mussulman if I do not receive my quantum. You a man, indeed, to be assistant of the Mirah, and when you ought to be doing your duty, tell us that you will not act!'

I again explained the impossibility of meeting their demands. I could not produce water where none was. I was not a prophet. I could not perform a miracle.

My words were of no avail. I might as well have talked to walls. The abusive language of my opponents became more violent. I was threatened to be torn to pieces. I was ap-

reached with violent gestures. Still I bore all with patience ; when one more arrogant than the rest coming on with a determination to do me harm, and having lifted up his arm to strike, I dealt him such a blow with my spade that I felled him to the ground.

Others then came on, I defended myself with vigour, keeping off the assailants as well as I was able, but I should have fallen a prey to their fury, had not the Mirab himself come to my rescue. His superior authority was a sufficient check, and quiet was restored. My conduct, however, was lauded in a manner quite beyond my merit. I was strolled as a hero, and my prowess having come to the ears of the commander of the king's body-guard, I was immediately taken from the service of the Mirab, who was loth to part with me, and enrolled among the royal *gholams*.

This was a piece of elevation for which I was not in the least prepared, and I accepted it with gratitude, as well as hope that it might lead to further advancement. In my exultation, I foresaw the possibility of becoming an accepted suitor to Gulchin.

It was reported that her uncles had recently refused the hand of a respectable tradesman; that their noses were well up, their hearts full of arrogance, and that they asserted she was too good for common mortals, a royal harem only being worthy of her. It was about this time, O King! that your slave had the good fortune to offer his humble assistance in relieving your miseries. See how great my good fortune! Who would have thought that so simple and natural an action would have led to the approval of a great Shah, and placed me in the envied position in which I now sit."

"You have spoken well, by Allah!" exclaimed Azbeaz, as soon as the youth had closed his lips. "You have spoken the truth, which, of all virtues, is the best as it is the rarest to the ears of a King. Now attend. In the first place, then, I shall call you Khodadad, for you, indeed, have been a gift of God to me—in the next place, if I enjoy any power as a King, I can raise the man I love best to whatever dignity I choose. I, therefore, create, you a khan. So now you are Khodadad Khan! No more words."

Upon which the youth was about to kneel before Azbeaz, to make the proper prostrations, and kiss the hem of his cloak, when he was suddenly prevented, desired to sit still and answer questions.

"Now, tell me," said Azbeaz, "tell me, where does the maiden live of whom you have spoken." Khodadad designated the precise spot. "And inform me," continued the King, "whether her uncles be not five old men, the most arrogant, insolent and ill-spoken men in the world." Khodadad answered in the affirmative.

"Before another moment has elapsed," said the King, "you will straightway take with you one of the executioner's officers, proceed, and return bringing with you the said old men, accompanied by the maiden, their wives and children. Conduct them hither without delay. Obey these are the King's commands under penalty of death."

Khodadad did as he was ordered. Taking with him an executioner's officer, he proceeded to the house, so well known to him as containing the object of his love, and knocking

at the door, he commanded it to be opened in the name of the King. The youngest old man with whom the maiden lived, came forward in great trepidation seeing a King's officer and an executioner at his door, and enquired what might be the news.

"We are come," said Khodadad, "on the part of the Shah. Collect your brothers and bring hither your niece. You must all go before the royal presence."

"We have done nothing. In the name of Allah," said the uncle, "wherefore should we again go before the King? We have already been pardoned and dismissed."

"Words are useless when the King commands," said the executioner's officer, who well knew his office. "Quick!—be stirring—do not keep the Shah waiting. Call hither your brothers, bid your niece put on her veil—let us be going."

Gulchin having heard the words of the officer, ran with haste and in dismay, followed by her mother to the men's apartments, and seeing Khodadad, she could scarcely recover from her surprise at so unexpected an occurrence.

"Fear nothing!" said Khodadad. "I am with you. Hasten to fulfil the King's commands."

Her mother would have opened the battery of her volubility had she been allowed, but seeing that matters were really serious, she prepared to obey commands which could not be resisted.

At length, the five old men, their niece and her mother, having been marshalled into a procession, they were led before the royal presence. Azbeaz was seated on his musnud, and the moment they appeared, he ordered them to stand on one side, with the maiden in front whilst he placed Khodadad immediately opposite. Then addressing Gulchin in a kind and cheering manner, he said:

"Tell me, fair one, do you know that person?" pointing to Khodadad.

After much hesitation, she said: "Yes, I know him. He is the same of whom your slave ventured to speak to your Majesty."

Her mother upon this avowal, would have spoken, but she was prevented. Then turning to the old men, Azbeaz said:

“Do you too know this youth?”

“Yes,” said one, “yes, we know him; he is Nejis Cooli, our late brother’s slave.”

“Yes,” said another, “he was found on a dunghill among a litter of puppies.”

“Yes,” said a third, “he had the audacity to love our niece.”

“Yes,” said a fourth, “he became a brawler and killed a gardener.”

“Yes,” said the fifth, “he then thought himself a great man, and proposed for our niece.”

“Now, fair one,” turning to Gulchin, the King said, “now here is Nejis Cooli, the child of uncleanness—a slave—one born on a dunghill—the brother of dogs. One who has dared to love you—a brawler—a killer of gardeners—who has proposed marriage to you. Now I, the Shah, ask you in the name of Allah, will you have him for your husband.”

The astounded maiden, the bewildered though entranced Gulchin, blushing through her veil, with an accent faltering from joyful excitement, answered in a firm voice. “Yes.”

“What words are these?” exclaimed the mother no longer able to contain her anger.

Why am I a mother, and why is she my daughter?"

"Hold your peace," exclaimed the King, and hear me. "You, who pretend to be a good mother—you, who with her uncles reared her to me, because, at the time I proposed, I was only a shoemaker, and who, now that I am a King, would force her to marry me. You, who have heard with your own ears, that she is attached to this youth with whom she was brought up as a sister, and now exclaim against their union. You wish to 'dispose of her, for your own purposes, not for her happiness—therefore, I hold there is no injustice in my decision—this man, pointing to Hodadad, who has proved himself resigned in adversity—humble in prosperity—constant to his first affections—true to his trust—brave in defence—charitable without the hope of recompence and submissive to authority—this man who is now my friend, who will be my adviser and my confidant, whom I have raised to honors and will raise to still higher dignities—this man I give to your daughter. What have you to say against my decision?"



“ We are your slaves ! Whose dogs are we ! Praise be to Allah we agree ! Mashallah, ma-shallah ! ”

These and such like phrases and exclamations were immediately made, and nothing was said but in acquiescence to the royal commands. The news of this act of the King’s judgment was soon spread abroad, and no one could discuss any other subject than his justice, and sagacity.

Khodadad as he had begun, so did he continue to enjoy the King’s favour and confidence. Having been united to his beloved Gulchin, he lived but to evince his devotion to his benefactor—he became the eye and the anchor of the state. Azbeaz placed the most unlimited confidence in him—there was only one secret which he had never yet disclosed to him, nor even allowed him to know that it existed, that of the miraculous key—he felt a longing so to do, but his tongue was spell bound ; whenever he wished to dilate on that subject so uppermost in his thoughts—the whole history of his strange adventures.

One day when particularly impelled to disclose his secret, he proposed ere he did so, to say his prayers at the royal mosque, but as he hated parade and was much oppressed by the ceremonial attendant upon the King, instead of mounting his horse, and leading out his guards and retinue of servants, he determined to walk. Escorted by Khodadad and a few attendants, he took his way through the bazaar with the intention of passing by his own stall and visiting the stepping stones, objects so full of recollections, and affording him a constant lesson upon the mutability of human affairs.

When he had proceeded thus far, looking towards his stall, he remarked that it was open, and approaching, to his surprise, he discovered his brother, bending over a last and his elbows squared, in the very act of making a shoe.

"Mashallah!" exclaimed Azbeaz, "this is well, wonderful are the works of God! Here am I a King, and Sakalchok a shoemaker!"

Sakalchok was so intent upon his business, that he did not remark who stood before him

—there he was on a low stool, surrounded by leather and lasts, stitching away with all the appearance of entire satisfaction. At length, looking up, he perceived his brother, to whom he said nothing, but the usual salutation of peace.

“Mashallah, mashallah!” exclaimed Azbeaz, “our eyes are enlightened—excellent, excellent—this is as it should be—you are become a man—you have met your destiny in a proper way.”

“I hope I have too,” said Sakalchok, “see here, drawing forth a shoe—see, here is a shoe, then, and I will defy the best shoemaker in the bazaar to produce a better—Sakalchok is somebody after all.”

Azbeaz, who though he stood before his brother a King, yet, was still in heart a shoemaker, when thus appealed to on a point of his profession, forgetting his dignities asserted his pre-eminence in the craft, and taking up the shoe with a scrutinizing eye, examining every part of it, said:

“It is all very well for a jeweller to make such a shoe, but I could make a better with

my eyes shut. Why there are not half enough stitches, and the upper leather is cut off too much."

"What say you?" said Sakalchok, exhibiting the same arrogance of manner as a shoemaker which he had of old as an elder brother—"what say you, not stitches enough, here are more than ever you put into your shoes, and as for the upper-leathers, they are cut out from your own patterns."

"You are young at the craft," said Azbeaz, "or you would not talk thus—you surely are not going to put your skill, so recently acquired, in competition with mine, the result of years of hard labour, which has curved my neck into the shape you see."

"I do not know how you acquired your skill," said Sakalchok with warmth and a taunting look, "but this I know, that that which takes the fool a whole life to acquire, is learnt by the clever man in a week. We understand things—whatever comes before us, our wit jumps upon, bestrides and bears it off;—I no sooner saw a shoe than I made one, and I will lay my beard against yours that I

will make a better shoe than you, such a one which you never saw, not even in a dream."

"*Be hey!*" exclaimed Azbeaz, "these are words, indeed! you make a shoe better than I can! you may be my elder brother, that is true, and I can't help it, but that you should make a better shoe, I'll sooner believe that the end of the world is at hand."

"Come sit down and try," said Sakalchok, "here is a last, here is leather."

"And wherefore not!" said the King, "am I a man to make pretensions and not fulfill them? give me the stool and let me sit."

"By this time, the brothers had entirely lost sight of their relative positions, and Azbeaz forgetful of his dignities, would forthwith have wielded the awl in the presence of the whole city, if Khodadad whose intelligent mind understood the fitness of things, had not reminded his King and patron, that the mosque was waiting for his reception, and that, perhaps, it might be as well to perform his devotions before he made the shoe.

"True you have said," answered the King, "what is woven in the cloth will shew itself at

edge; the truth is that I shall ever be a  
King, but as I believe in Allah, I here de-  
clare that I am a good shoemaker."

Thus terminated this strange scene, in which  
with so much prevailed, that Azbeaz sighed,  
he proceeded to the performance of his  
duties and turned his back upon his old  
bits.

Sakalchok, on the other hand, who had wit-  
nessed his brother's elevation with envy, had  
pondered over it with a heavy heart, and had  
come to the conclusion that, perhaps, the  
shortest cut to a throne was a previous seat  
on a cobbler's bench, making a virtue of ne-  
cessity, he had adopted that alternative, which  
though, perhaps, not the means of restoring him  
his fortune and situation, would secure him a  
reputation accompanied by the good will of the  
king.

And well did he calculate, for Azbeaz was so  
well pleased with his brother's conduct, that ere  
he left the mosque, he had with his own hand  
written an order for the restoration of all  
Sakalchok's possessions.

Upon their return, Azbeaz whose heart had

expanded at Sakalchok's docility, was softened by prayer, and whose affection for his young friend had increased tenfold in proportion, as he became better acquainted with his virtues, could no longer resist the desire of unfolding to him the secret of the miraculous key. Therefore, taking him into his private closet, and ordering every one but Khodadad from before him, he addressed him thus :

“ Khodadad, my son, for I look upon you as such, I have nothing to conceal from you, all I have is yours—you once assisted me in adversity when shunned by every one else; owing to your care, probably, my life was saved—by the decrees of destiny from being a mechanic I am become a King, by means as strange as they were irresistible. The instrument producing my elevation is in my possession, with it I can command a power which renders me the most powerful potentate in the world—no throne, however guarded, could withstand the armies I might pour forth. But ambition has no charms for me, this power will lie dormant as long as I live—I exist but for peace, and in the hope of doing some little

od. I would that others were exalted before  
—to me the trappings and circumstance  
royalty are oppressive. I have determined  
prove the extent of my friendship, by  
confiding to you the secret of my power; but  
you alone must it be confined, were others  
acquainted with it, my peace would be endan-  
gered, and I should become a prey to the  
schemes of designing men. I can confide in  
a Khodadad, the same fidelity you have  
hereto shewn, you will I'm sure continue to  
exercise, and then if aught should happen to  
me, if death were to take me away suddenly,  
my secret will be in safe hands, and  
in the possession of one who, I am certain,  
will not abuse the power he will be able to  
command."

So saying, he drew from the secret place  
a mysterious key.

"This key," said he, "possesses the  
wonderful quality of dragging a person  
forward whether he will or not, until it  
discloses wonders which cannot be believed  
until seen. It has made a King of me and



that is saying enough ; here—take it in hand and you will judge whether what I say be true or not.”

Upon which he desired Khodadad to take up the key, when, in so doing, the colour of the youth changed, and his features assumed a new expression. Feeling the communicated pressure, he fain would have immediately walked away in the direction, which it seemed to persuade him to go, and, indeed, made some hasty steps towards the door of the apartment, to the astonishment and even alarm of the King.

“ Stay ! stay, for heaven’s sake ! ” said he, “ this is no child’s play—if it once gets you clear of the city, you will never stop until you become King yourself.”

Khodadad had sufficient command over himself to let the key drop from his hand, which having done, he bent forward and inspected it with open mouth and out-stretched hands, looking like one demented, when, at length, he exclaimed, “ wonderful ! wonderful ! wonderful ! ! ”

“ You may, indeed, exclaim wonderful ! ”

Azbeaz, "I said not half enough of its surprising qualities."

"No, indeed," said the youth, "I am become filled with astonishment; wherefore, oh my father, have you disclosed to me this secret! This is the wonder of wonders—let me depart if the temptation be too strong and I take my leave again."

"Go, my child," said Azbeaz, "you are now possessed of my great secret, but as you love me, do not fear Allah disclose it to no one—Go."

Khodadad retired from the King's presence, and when he, the King, replaced the key which he had taken it, not without some deliberation concerning the wisdom of the step he had just taken.

"The youth is trustworthy," he thought within himself, "I would stake my head on this—he loves me and is grateful—of that too I am sure. He never can wish to be a King, at least, not yet—he is too young, and by the time he is old, he may become King and welcome."

But Khodadad's whole nature had been

strongly affected by what he had seen and undergone—he left Azbeaz wrapt in deep meditation, and would willingly have given half his existence for permission to follow the fortunes of the key, whithersoever it might have led him.

After his marriage with Gulchin, the King had bestowed upon him one of the courts of the palace, as a habitation, and there he was now established. His beautiful wife entirely sympathized in his feelings of gratitude to the Shah for all his kindnesses, and considering the favour with which he beheld Khodadad, there was every prospect of the happy couple enjoying a continuance of encreasing prosperity.

When she saw her husband return with a clouded brow and a face expressive of care and abstraction, she became alarmed, and quickly ceding to apprehension, she felt that he might have lost the King's favour.

“What has happened in the name of Allah?” said she, with affectionate concern in her looks, “say—say, for I am afraid.”

"Nothing, my soul," said Khodadad, "as you live there is nothing."

"Then why these looks? I am sure something has happened—you must tell me," said the affectionate Gulchin, "women are not easily mistaken."

Again Khodadad repeated, "*Bir chey yok*, here is nothing!"

Again she pressed him, and again he repeated his answer. But in vain did he assure his wife that his wits were undisturbed, and that his brain was in a healthy state, still the miraculous key so entirely occupied his mind, he walked about like one in his sleep. At length his wife's importunities became so great, that in his own defence, he was obliged to own that there was a mystery—a strange occurrence had taken place, which he was not at liberty to disclose—in short, he asserted that he possessed a state secret, which he was bound, by an oath, to the Shah, his benefactor, never to disclose.

Gulchin was a woman to the very extremity of her longest tress of hair, and she became

determined to know the secret. She first met her husband's disclosure by a long silence—the only words she occasionally uttered were, “a secret!—so, there is a secret!” and this she said with a look so sad and reproachful, that Khodadad was much disturbed by it. The confidence which, to this moment, had been the charm of their existence, was lost. There existed something which one of them knew and was unknown to the other. That little circumstance became sufficient to endanger their happiness, and their once joyous and unrestrained intercourse was now destroyed. Khodadad loved his wife with rapture and devotedness, but he also loved his master, and felt himself bound to obey him, under any circumstances however perplexing.

When the secret was fresh in his mind, he was sternly determined to allow nothing—not even the well-being of his wife, to make him disclose it. But when its first effects had passed away, and when day after day, he was afflicted by the reproachful looks of his Gulchin, and by her

erident misery at his apparent want of confidence, he gradually began to argue with himself whether it might not be possible to disclose it to her, and still preserve his integrity.

Gulchin's depression of spirits, at length began to exhibit its effects upon her person. She became thin and pale; she fretted, was peevish, and, in truth, her conduct so caused Khodadad to feel how much his happiness depended upon hers, that the sturdiness of his integrity was step by step undermined, until, at length, it broke down altogether.

"I will tell her," said he to himself; "if she really loves me, the secret will be as safe in her custody as in mine." Accordingly he called her to him, and said: "O my soul, Gulchin, you have seen to what extent my heart has been burnt up, and how greatly my liver has drooped. I too have remarked that your countenance has turned from me, and that little by little, we have become two. This is not as it should be. It has pleased Allah to send us misfortune. We have been

visited by a great secret. It has destroyed our confidence in each other, and we who ought to be like two kernels in one almond, are separated like the shells thereof. I can no longer bear this state. If you love me as you ought, my secret will be your secret, as my heart is your heart. Therefore, Gulchin, O my soul! I will divulge it."

At these words the drooping wife cheered up, and assumed all the smiles and blandishments of the devoted mistress. She ran to her husband, and kissing his hands, his shoulders and his knees, said :

"You are again my Khodadad! Now you are, indeed, the same you once were. What can you mean by doubting my power to keep a secret? Are not man and wife one? Then what one knows, the other should know—what one likes, the other should like—what one hates, the other should hate. Thanks be to Allah and the Prophet! the days of Gulchin's trials are over, and again, Mashallah! we shall see prosperity."

Upon which the affectionate pair embrac-

g, Khodadad from beginning to end, related the history of the key. Gulchin, as he proceeded, could not discover why the facts which he related should be so much a matter of secrecy. Every one in general terms, was acquainted with the miracle which had placed thebeaz upon the throne, although, perhaps, it is not known by what particular agency it had been effected. She, however, continued to give the utmost attention to her husband's words, and when he said, "Now hear!" she doubled that attention.

"Now hear!" said he. "This key, this extraordinary key is in the Shah's possession—he shewed it me—he placed it in my hand—I felt its influence—I almost became mad with excitement—I would have run with it to the end of the world—it invited me to elope by its most significant pressure—"

"And suppose you had!" exclaimed Gulchin. "What would have happened?"

"I should have returned, the King."

"The King!" she exclaimed, in a voice denoting profound astonishment. "The King!"



again she said, pausing with all the inward thought which accompanies the knowledge of a great secret.

“Aye,” said Khodadad, “I should be the King.”

“And where is the key now?” said Gulchin, with faltering lips and an excited expression of countenance.

“Where?” said Khodadad, as if afraid of allowing the surrounding air to hear where it was concealed. “Am I to tell you where?”

“And wherefore not?” said Gulchin. “What have we to do with the key? But I should greatly like to see it.”

“I should be afraid to feel it again,” said Khodadad. “for I will not answer for myself. You have no conception of its all-powerful influence. I could scarcely prevent myself from running off with it, even in the presence of my King and benefactor. What would it be then, were he not present to check me by his presence?”

“But I might just look at it,” said his wife  
“there can be no harm in that.”

"No, perhaps, not," said Khodadad, "for after all, it does not differ from any other key in appearance—and in that lies the temptation—it looks nothing at first, but when you come to the touch and the sentiment, then, like many other temptations, it becomes irresistible. If you love me, my life, do not ask me to approach nearer to it than we are at present, for as sure as you do, you will see me flee from your presence, to go heaven knows whither, conducted by the powers of jins and peris to the realms of mystery and darkness."

"But to come back the King!" exclaimed Gulchin, with unwonted animation, at the same time scarcely venturing to trust her lips with the words.

"As you love Allah! as you respect yourself! By my soul and by the King's salt, never repeat such words," said Khodadad. "We poor miserable mortals, yesterday the meanest of the earth, to-day basking in the sunshine of power and royalty, shall we venture to breathe a thought so full of wickedness? Shall we

think of becoming King, when but a short time since we looked upon our existence as a misfortune, whilst we now owe all our happiness to him who is the King. Heaven and Allah forbid!"

"True," said Gulchin, with compunction in the tone of her voice and a down-cast eye. "Still," she added, "he was like us before he became the Shah. One morning he was perched on a three-legged stool, stitching a shoe, the next he was seated on a golden throne, pronouncing judgment of life and death."

"*He* acted through ignorance," said Khodadad, "*we* know all—there is the difference."

"But we intend nothing," said his wife, "Allah forbid! Could I but see the key, I should be satisfied."

Upon this, the conversation came to an end for the present, but it had laid the foundation of a long train of thought in both their minds so subversive of their peace and contentment, that they were no longer the same persons. They never met, but Gulchin was sure to lead

her remarks to the all-engrossing subject, and although Khodadad did all in his power to get rid of it, still there it was, like his shadow, not to be shaken off.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY SCHULZE AND CO. 13, FOLAND STREET.



THE MIRZA.

—  
VOL. II.

LONDON  
PRINTED BY SCHULER AND CO. 13, POLAND STREET.

## THE MIRZA.

---

STORY OF AZBEAZ, THE SHOEMAKER  
KING, CONTINUED.

The apartments occupied by Khodadad and Gulchin communicated with those of the Shah by a private door, through which Khodadad had free access, and the closet containing the key was so situated that temptation never ceased its persecutions. Azbeaz was wont, at stated times, to frequent the royal mosque, invariably accompanied by Khodadad; indeed, such was the King's love for him, that he was never happy unless so accompanied. On this account, it was difficult to find an opportunity, even should Khodadad have so desired, to satisfy his wife's curiosity; but as, in passing events, there is ever something which seems



to shadow the future, it was easy to perceive how the struggle here involved between duty and inclination would terminate. A circumstance soon occurred illustrative of this truth.

Sakalchok, the King's brother, having been restored to the full possession of his property, had abandoned the shoemaker's stall in the bazaar, and returned to the enjoyment of his home. In order to celebrate this event, and thereby to make a display of his gratitude, he thought it fitting to invite the King to a grand entertainment. He decorated his house with flowers, spread new carpets where the King was to sit, hired men and women singers and dancers, and ordered fire-works. Every luxury in season was spread on his board; a present of costly stuffs and precious ornaments was prepared, and the ground on which the royal footsteps trod, was overlaid with shawls of costly manufacture. All the dignitaries of the court, the chiefs of departments and those possessing wealth or distinction, not omitting the five old men, were gathered together on the occasion. The King was received at the gate by his brother, who waited upon him as

a menial throughout the day, whilst Khodadad, the acknowledged royal favourite, stood pre-eminent near the person receiving constant marks of confidence and preference. During the course of the entertainment, when it was about drawing to a close, the five old men having obtained permission, stood forward making the lowest obeisance by touching their foreheads to the ground, the youngest, being spokesman, said :

"May it please the centre of the universe, this humblest of his slaves has a petition to make."

"Speak on," said Azbeaz, "what is there new?"

"This less than the least," said he, "requests permission to address your Majesty without the presence of a witness."

"So be it," said the King, "let every one go from before me."

All retired out of hearing distance, excepting Khodadad.

"We are not alone," said the youngest old man.

"This is my second self," said the King, pointing to the favourite, "fear not."

"Your slave must be silent, if such be your royal pleasure; but, as Allah is Allah, the matter is of great importance."

"Light of my eyes, retire!" exclaimed the Shah to Khodadad, who forthwith retreated, although he kept his attention anxiously fixed upon the scene that was enacting before him.

As soon as the King was thus left, the youngest old man, kneeling down, said in an under tone :

"May it please the asylum of the world, and as I am your sacrifice, my petition principally relates to Khodadad Khan. Your Majesty is aware of the current report, that when an infant he was found on a dunghill among a litter of puppies near the walls of the royal palace, by a negress, then slave to our deceased brother the money-changer. It is but this morning that I received a message from that same negress, now on her death bed, asserting that she possesses a secret of great

importance relating to Khodadad Khan, but which she can and will only divulge to your Majesty in person. Your humble slave, therefore, entreats your Majesty to accede to her wish, and, if it so pleases your Majesty, he will conduct you to her bedside."

"There is no harm in her demand," said Azbeaz. "We will go—where does she live?"

"As I am your sacrifice," said the other, "she resides in a poor village in the mountains, some five parasangs distant."

"There will be no difficulty," said the King; "we will go to-morrow."

"Your slave has still one more petition to make."

"Speak on," said the King.

"It is that Khodadad Khan do not accompany your Majesty."

"So be it," said the King; "I will see to that."

During this conference, the eyes of all were fixed upon the King and the youngest old man, great curiosity having been excited, but principally was that feeling aroused in the breast

of Khodadad, for he could plainly perceive, by the looks and gesticulation of the parties in conversation, that frequent allusion was made to him. His astonishment was still more awakened when he heard the Shah announce publicly that he should hunt on the following morning.

“ Hunt !” exclaimed Khodadad ; “ the King can scarcely sit on a horse, how can he hunt ! There is something more in this than meets the eye.”

As soon as he again stood before his royal master, he exclaimed :

“ Mashallah ! your slave is made happy. We hear your Majesty rides out hunting to-morrow.”

“ So it is,” said Azbeaz, a slight tint of confusion giving colour to his manner. “ You are surprised because you presume I cannot ride. No more I can, and what is there extraordinary in that, when you know that I have bestrode nothing but a cobbler’s stool all my life ? Still I hunt to-morrow.”

“ What steed is your slave to prepare for your Majesty’s convenience ?” said Khodadad.

"You are to prepare nothing," said the King; "and what is more, you are not to accompany me."

At these words, the favourite was almost struck dumb with astonishment.

"Not accompany you!" he exclaimed. "What fault have I committed? Has your Majesty spoken your real mind, or has your Majesty not understood aright?"

"Whatever I have said—I have said," answered the King. "You do not go."

Khodadad left the presence for the first time displeased. Although the King had given no reason why he was not allowed to go; and although his manner was unchanged in kindness, still he was overwhelmed by this evident want of confidence, and in his gloom, contemplated it as the beginning of his downfall. He had received no intimation of what the youngest old man had communicated, a slight which the King had never before cast upon him, and he was left to ruminate upon this new position which his affairs had assumed, without the hope of any immediate redress. In this frame

of mind, wounded both in pride and in spirits, he returned to his wife, who soon perceived the change which had been effected in his demeanour.

“What has happened, light of my eyes?” exclaimed the affectionate Gulchin. “Your countenance is turned upside down.”

“In truth it is,” said Khodadad. “I am full of astonishment and vexation.” Upon which he related all that had occurred.

“Ah! is it so?” exclaimed Gulchin. “This is my uncle’s work; let me go seek him and make him explain. Can those five wretched old men have laid their heads together to plot our destruction? This cannot be, for by so doing, they will take the caps from off their own heads. Is it a little thing to have a niece at court, who can create a good shade for them to sit under? This passes comprehension.”

Being late in the day when this took place, Gulchin deferred going to seek her uncle until the following morning. Having done so, she found that he had accompanied the Shah in his hunting excursion, and she returned home,

almost as much vexed and mortified as Khodadad had been. They sat in deep consultation what was to be done.

"I wonder," said Khodadad, "whether the Shah has taken the key with him? If he has, then indeed I shall begin to fear that my day is over, and that the sun has set upon us for ever."

As soon as he had uttered these words, Gulchin arose from her seat, and with great animation, said :

"My soul, Khodadad, let us go see—there is nothing to prevent us—the Shah is absent and the closet open."

"Let us go," said her husband; "there can be no danger; if the key is gone, 'tis well I should know it; if not, we will straightway return whence we came."

Accordingly, taking each other by the hand, they proceeded from their own apartment into that of the King. All the attendants of the palace looking upon Khodadad in the same light as the King himself, every door was open to him. When, accompanied by Gulchin, he entered the closet, Khodadad cast his eyes



immediately towards the very spot where he knew the key had been secreted.

“Nothing has been touched here,” said he. The very box in which it was kept, then met his eye; he approached and straightway opened it. There was the key untouched; his body was seized with a tremour when he surveyed it, whilst his countenance underwent a sudden change.

“My soul, Khodadad, what is the matter?” said Gulchin—“wherefore are you so alarmed? Here is nothing but a common rusty key—what is this?”

“Touch it not, Gulchin!” exclaimed her husband. “You are ignorant of its power.”

“Touch it not!” repeated his wife, in surprise; “how very weak you must be to be thus alarmed! Let me take it up.” Upon which, seizing it, and keeping hold of it for some time, her face too changed colour, and her heart began to beat violently.

“By your soul, Khodadad,” she said, “this is odd! how very marvellous! it quite presses my hand.”

“Give it to me in the name of Allah!” said

her husband, fearful lest its impulse might assume too powerful an influence over his wife, and accordingly he took it into his own hand. "Give it to me," he repeated, and he stood grasping it, his hand extended like one impelled by the magic of some mighty temptation. His wife now became frightened at his looks; they bespoke a wildness and an agitation which predicted some strange event.

"Wonderful! wonderful!" exclaimed Khodadad, advancing a few steps towards the door.

"Stop," said Gulchin, "throw it down in the name of the prophet."

"I am without help—my power is gone," said Khodadad, panting from excess of excitement; "I can no more." Upon saying which, he moved, or rather ran off with increasing speed, whilst his wife, almost fainting with fright, summoned strength, and sprung forward to seize his robe, which falling from his shoulders as he darted away, remained in her hand, whilst her eyes glared upon him in wonder, until she saw him fairly disappear through a distant gate-way. Her faintness

then increased, and tottering back to her own apartment, she gave way to the most desponding apprehension, running to and fro in every direction, devising a thousand bewildering schemes for overtaking him, and then abandoning them in despair as fast as they were devised. She then opened every casement, ran to the terrace top, in the hope of catching some glimpse of him, and finished by despatching servants into every avenue of the palace, to ascertain whether or not he had been seen to pass. At length, exhausted and worn by anxiety, she lay down in despair, when the following extraordinary words which he had once uttered 'I shall come back a king,' struck her recollection, and she started from her couch like one demented. Her quick imagination rung the changes upon those words in endless variety. She wondered what they could really portend—how such a thing could be—who was to place him on the throne—what was to become of Azbeaz—what would become of her; there was no end to the tortures of doubt and uncertainty by which she became afflicted, and in that state we must leave her

for the present, to see what the other personages of our tale are undergoing.

Azbeaz had issued forth from his palace at the earliest call of the morning, escorted by the youngest old man as his guide, and by all the state and circumstance attendant upon a royal hunting expedition. He bestrode a steady mule, and was seated upon an easy cushion, for no horseman was he, and no saddle had his knees ever clasped. Having purposely ordered his huntsmen and attendants to disperse in search of game, in order to cloak his purpose, and taking only a few followers with him, he pursued his way, until they reached an obscure village high up in the mountainous range that skirted the plain. He alighted at the door of a hovel, into which his guide entered first, in order to prepare the invalid for the arrival of the King. Azbeaz having followed, he perceived, lying on the ground on a decayed carpet, the old negress, apparently in the last stage of decrepitude. She was still enough alive to be able to understand who was her visitor, and having been raised up a little, she proceeded in a sufficiently

audible voice to stammer out the following words :

“Forgive the weakness of a dying old woman, but the secret she has to divulge must be known, or she will die with the weight of committing an injustice on her head. Give ear, whatever I say is the truth.”

“Good! good!” said the King, “we can’t have enough of truth.”

It was thus she continued :

“The late King, every body knows, was an usurper; he put his predecessor to death by poison, slew all the children of that unfortunate man, and no heir was left. The chance of one, however, still existed, because one of the surviving wives proved to be with child. That wife happening to be very beautiful, the usurper did not kill her, but ordered that the moment her offspring saw light, it should be thrown to the dogs. That poor creature (for she died shortly after) placed great confidence in me, and she made me promise to save her child. I did save it. She gave birth to a son, which I was the means of conveying to the house of this man’s brother, (pointing to the

youngest old man,) and he was brought up by him. I hear he is alive and noticed by the present Shah. This is a proof of what I assert," and she held up a jewel richly set in gold; "this was round the child's neck when I brought it away from the dying mother. I have said it—now let me die in peace."

Azbeaz opened well his ears to catch the words of the dying negress, and when she ceased speaking, without betraying any unpleasant emotion, but rather a feeling of joy, he exclaimed,

"Then, as I live, Khodadad is the lawful King."

The words had scarcely left his mouth, before the sound—the awful sound of the great gong on the turret, so well known to the ears of Azbeaz, was heard, which rung throughout the mountain with the same portentous reverberations as have been before described. Azbeaz having listened with the greatest attention until the sound had entirely expired, exclaimed :

"There goes another King, as sure as fate. By my beard that key is at work again. If

it be Khodadad, there is no harm done; but should it be Sakalchok, then we must put our trust in Allah, for there is none to be placed in him."

He had scarcely made an end of these words, when, turning round, he perceived the old negress a corpse by his side, and the youngest old man shaking in his shoes from head to foot.

"Let us go," he exclaimed, "let us go see what destiny has prepared for us. It is plain that some change has occurred in the world, for if nothing else speaks truth, that gong with a burnt father does."

Having ordered a proper burial to be provided for the deceased, and giving some words of encouragement to his companion, he mounted his mule, and making all haste across the plain, returned to the city. As he approached, he perceived an unusual stir about the gate, and crowds of people collected together in groups, all being armed, and apparently prepared to meet some great emergency. He roared out to the first man he saw, and inquired what news?

"By your soul and by the King's beard," said the man, "what can your slave know, at what he is told? We are informed that there is a new King."

"What is his name?" said Azbeaz, with great anxiety in his accent.

"By the prophet, what do I know?" said he.

Going further and advancing into the city, he again inquired of an assembly of well dressed men.

"What's the name of the new King?"

As soon as they recognized Azbeaz, they bowed themselves to the ground, (for he was highly respected), and said :

"As we are your slaves, it is Khodadad Khan—curses be on his head—what more can we say?"

"If it be Khodadad," exclaimed Azbeaz, with his inevitable smile, "then praise be to Allah; for he is our lawful King—lead me to him."

"What manner of man is this?" said they, in utter astonishment; "he is either the maddest or the wisest of men. Whether he be



shoemaker, or whether he be King, he always laughs and is always contented. See, he says *Shukiur Allah*, praise be to God, upon losing a throne—wonderful madman is he !”

Azbeaz made his way to the palace through crowded streets, astonishing every one by his determination, for who could conceive that his life was not in jeopardy if submitted to the power of the new King? When he reached the court of the palace, in the recess of which the great throne is situated, he there found congregated the courtiers, the viziers, men of the pen, and men of the sword, but on looking towards the throne, upon which he expected to see Khodadad duly seated, he perceived it to be vacant. An avenue was made for him to pass through, and he was treated with every demonstration of respect, as if he were still the King. He had not proceeded many steps, ere he perceived Khodadad advancing in haste towards him, holding the key in his hand. He straightway threw himself at his feet, whilst at the same time, presenting the mysterious instrument of his elevation, and depositing it before him, he exclaimed :

"Pardon! pardon! we have done wrong!

Forgive my crime. The temptation was too great, and your slave could not resist—miserable that he is—oh forgive—forgive!"

"What words are these?" said Azbeaz.

"Am I the only man in the world to be King?

What do you see in this hump and monkey face, that you should insist upon his becoming

the head of the nation? No—all is as it should be. We are not the children of Allah

for nothing. He ordains every event for the best—he sees whilst we are blind—he directs

whilst we only follow. You have been pursuing the decrees of fate, and in so doing, truth

has come to light, and the world will perceive how justice has been ordained. You, Khoda-

dad, you are the lawful King of this country. See this, O, you men—men of the pen—and

men of the sword!" addressing the assembly, and at the same time, drawing from his breast

the jewel delivered to him by the dying negress, "this bauble is a proof of the truth

of what I say."

He then described, in a few words, the scene to which he had been witness, ordered

the youngest old man to stand forth and corroborate his words, and finished by declaring that Khodadad was the lawful King, the descendant of the former dynasty, and then invited, the proper authorities instantly to instal him as such.

Khodadad in all humility consented to that which he could not avoid, and being led forth by Azbeaz, and conducted to the room of state, over the great gate of the palace, he was then duly presented to the people as their lawful sovereign. Gulchin looked on from the terrace-top in rapture, whilst Azbeaz, who became, in fact, the adviser and the principal vizier, as he continued to be the bosom friend of the new King, returned to pursuits and habits which he cherished, and it is even said, was charmed to have an opportunity of shewing that he could make a shoe better than Sakalchok.

---

Every one present appeared charmed, and expressed their approbation by repeating the words Mashallah and Barikallah, as soon as the Prince ceased to speak, but no one seemed

at all surprized at the miraculous parts of the story, and appeared to look upon them quite as a matter of course.

"And this is all true," said the Prince, as soon as he had taken breath. "The mountains are there to the present day, the very hole in their surface from which issued the armies exists, and the ruins of the tower may be traced in the plain, although little is left of the city."

"Most certainly it is true," said my neighbour, the Tartar chief, "descendants of Azbeaz are now in existence, and all that part of Tartary which once owned his sway, is very well governed; some are even old enough to recollect the tower and the great gong."

"This is quite possible," calmly remarked, my friend, the Mirza, "for more extraordinary things than those related by the Prince have come to pass. Only turn to the history of our Rustam Zal, and you will see that he, with his own arm, performed more wonders than all Azbeaz's iron armies put together. And as for the power of the key, is there a day of my life in which I am not impelled to act in spite of my reason? Are

---

there not temptations which run away with me quite as much as did the key with Azbeaz and Khodadad? Therefore that part of the story is quite easy to believe."

"But what does the *Sahib*, the gentleman, say to my tale?" said the Prince, turning towards me with great deference of manner. "I hope he has done me the honour to approve."

I did not fail to express myself extremely delighted; I complimented the Prince upon his manner of expressing himself, but particularly upon his invention; "for," said I, "you really have given the appearance of truth to that which must, in its nature, be fabulous."

"How is this," said he, "will you not believe that such things can be? All the members of this company are ready to believe, and even take their oaths, if necessary, to the truth of what I have related, and why too should not you believe?"

"A very long discussion, indeed, would ensue," said I, "were I to endeavour to show you why I cannot believe in supernatural

agencies, exercised locally, partially, and for objects which do not apparently comprehend the well-being of the whole of God's creation, and which are not so fully established by proof and witnesses, as entirely to overcome my unbelief." Then recollecting the old story of the flying fish and Pharoah's chariot wheel; I said :

"But do not be angry if I refuse to give credence to what you have related, however much delighted I may be with the story ; perhaps, I too, may assert some facts relating to my own country, to which you may not be willing to give credence, but to the truth of which, I, in my turn, am ready to take my oath."

"*Ohi—oh*, well said and well done," said the Prince, his words echoed by the poet, and repeated by the rest of the company. "Speak on—let us hear—our ears are all open. We have given up our souls to you."

I then said :

"Perhaps every one present has seen a ship, and though they may not have sailed in one, have remarked how it is impelled by wind ; perhaps, too, some may have been caught in a tempest, or observed its effects on the sea.

Now, we have ships in my country, which, in defiance of storms and tempests, will make their way right in the teeth of the wind, and thus perform voyages from one end of the world to the other."

I paused awhile after having made this assertion to hear the remarks of the company. I could perceive incredulity in every face; a little scorn and contempt, perhaps, was associated with that feeling, but it was plain no one believed my words.

"*Sahib ekhtiar*. You are at liberty, of course, to affirm what you please," said the Prince, "but to me, it appears that what you have advanced is wholly impossible."

"What words are these?" said another. "You might as well say that I can thrust a spear through my enemy's body, and he not bleed, as to say a ship will go ahead against wind."

I heard the word *derough*, *derough*—lie! lie! whispered about from mouth to mouth throughout the assembly, and I became convinced that I was totally disbelieved.

I then tried them upon another subject.

"There is another thing," said I, "to the truth of which I am ready to take my oath. In my country, our cities are lighted at night by the means of lanterns suspended on iron pillars. A subterranean vapour is made to circulate through our streets, which is led to the summit of the said pillars, and at a given hour, men run about the city, carrying a lighted taper in their hands, which they merely present to a small spiral tube, whence a flame is seen to issue, which keeping alive the night through, illuminates the city like day, the inhabitants meanwhile sleeping soundly, unapprehensive of evil consequences."

"Where, in the name of Allah," said the Prince, "have you found words to affirm such things? A subterranean fire running under ground all through your streets, and nobody afraid! Yours must be a world different from ours, inhabited by men of a different formation to Persians. I cannot believe what you say."

"People may talk of Persians being liars,"



said one of the company, "but as there is but one Allah, and Mahommed is his prophet and Ali his lieutenant, let them go to the Franks for the future. Wonderful assertions have we heard to-day."

"Now I begin to understand," said a man of the law who was present, "why Franks are unbelievers of our faith, the ever blessed and only true faith of Islam, why they reject our prophet and despise his sayings, while they adhere with so much pertinacity to their own. See this Sahib—he tells us of things which cannot be true, and believes in them, whilst events which may occur every day, which so many people here present, men of respectability and worthy of confidence, have seen and heard of, he rejects. Is it not plain that the reputation which Persia has acquired for the sagacity and acuteness of her sons, has been well acquired, whilst all the rest of mankind are kept in a state of total blindness. Let the Sahib forgive my words," said the speaker, turning himself to me, "but in truth, our holy prophet legislated with all wisdom, when he

said, 'As for the unbeliever, all that is left for him, is *katl, katt, slay, slay.*'"

"May your shadow never be less," said I, laughing, addressing the man of the law, whilst I assumed a mock humility of manner; "may your house flourish—we are grateful—we kiss the dust of your slippers!"

My words and manner seemed to amuse the Prince and his guests, for instead of siding with the man of the law, they most good humouredly laughed outright, and evinced by their conduct, how little they partook of the holy man's zeal. This circumstance produced the effect of turning the conversation into a new channel, and I was questioned on the right hand and on the left, upon the nature of our institutions in Frangistan, for so they call Europe, with a pertinacity and liveliness of curiosity, which exhibited one of the most striking characteristics of the Persians in its strongest colours, namely, their love of hearing and knowing of strange things.

"Sir," said one *berai khoda*, "in the name

of Allah, is it true that you never see the sun in your country?"

"We can't believe," said another, "what is currently reported here, that you cut your horses' tails off, and also go to the trouble of cutting your dogs' tails off too."

Close upon this question followed another

"Forgive me," said a third, "but swear by the soul of your father and mother is it true that your Kings dance like luties?\*" And is it also true that women may rule over you, and that they too dance in public?"

Before I could satisfy any one of these questions, I heard a voice crying out from a distance :

"Tell me, O Sahib, can you belong to a nation which holds nothing unclean, to people who may even eat of a dog and not be defiled? This passes our comprehension."

At length, our host, the Prince, who was too well bred to allow of my being more questioned and teased, seeing it impossible for me to

\* Professed buffoons

satisfy every one's curiosity, called for kalians, as a signal for breaking up the assembly. Having performed this last act of the usual ceremonial, the Prince took leave of us with the most flattering speeches, assuring each of his guests of the pleasure he had enjoyed in their society, and hoped, on some future occasion, that we might meet again. As a stranger, he distinguished me more particularly by his attentions, and I left him impressed with favourable notions of Tartar urbanity. I quitted the house in company of my friend, the poet-laureat, who, I could not but remark, had been disgusted with the exhibition made by his countrymen of their ignorance and want of proper breeding in their conduct towards me. He exclaimed as we rode along :

"Did you see, O my soul! did you ever see such animals—apes—beasts with a mark upon them?"

I assured him that I had been extremely amused, regretted that all Asiatics were not possessed of his discernment and sagacity, and left him, hoping that he would soon

again allow me to hear another of his most agreeable stories.

“Upon my eyes be it,” said he, and we parted.

## VISIT IV.

I soon called upon my friend again with a view of adding another story to my stock, for destitute as I usually was of occupation, and oppressed by much leisure, I determined to persevere in that which not only afforded me great actual enjoyment, but also materially increased my insight into Asiatic manners. The Mirza expressed himself happy to see me, and, moreover, was flattered at my pertinacity, in listening to what, in his modesty, he called, 'words without texture—things of naught—vain imaginations.' I said, although I was much amused by the stories which he related, I admired his invention, and the happiness of his expressions, and should be happy to listen to them merely for the amusement's sake; yet, in truth, I was principally attracted by certain observations and allusions which came

from him incidentally, and which constantly confirmed and threw much light upon the text of our sacred books. Such observations, I remarked, were invaluable to us who were given to inquisitiveness, sceptical in matters difficult of proof, and who were more willing to cede our belief to one single coincidence adduced in the manner detected in his stories, than to whole volumes of dissertation and argument.

The Mirza was struck by this remark, and with that acuteness of perception which I have seldom met in a Mahommedan, he perceived at once its tendency.

“Our manners, mode of government, ceremonial, in short, everything you see in Persia and generally in Asia,” said he, “are so many living monuments of antiquity. Since the days of Jemsheed, it may be said that my country is still the same. True it has been occasionally overrun from east to west and then from west to the east, first by the Tartars, and then by the Saracens, but as they are Asiatics as well as ourselves, and our manners being much the same, no great

changes have been effected. It may, indeed, be said that one despotic King is much like another, in forms and modes of government, at least, although there may be great varieties of individual disposition and character. What occurred in such matters in the days of Kaiomers, the first King of the Pshadian dynasty, occurred in those of Gustasp, the last of that race ; and so on through their successors, the Iskanders, the Darabs, the Seljuks, the Sefies, the Timours, the Nadirs, down to our own time, all have pursued the same system of government. We have witnessed no great revolutions, such as we hear of in Frangistan, where we find that the people occasionally gain the upper hand, put Kings to death, and appoint some of their own class to govern in their stead. We are always the same, our ideas run in the same channel, and, indeed, being far removed from more enlightened nations, I do not see how we can ever change."

"What appears impossible to us mortals," said I, "is brought about by the inscrutable hand of Providence. Although you do not



'change, European nations do. My own country is famous for its changes. Not a year passes over our heads without some invention being produced, which gives a new impetus to people's minds and turns their energies into new channels. Then we are found in all parts of the world, legislating, governing, interfering, aiding the oppressed and relieving the indigent. Why should we not find our way also into your countries? To say the truth, I know of no Asiatic nation which, if properly acted upon, would sooner catch the spirit of innovation and improvement than the Persian. You are gay, light and docile by nature, and are fond of imitation; as an instance, who could ever have supposed that during the short sojourn of our military men amongst you, they could have achieved the singular feat of creating an army upon European principles? But so it is, and so it would be in every thing else. You are also remarkably intelligent, quick of apprehension, and enthusiastic in your admiration, where your reason is convinced. Such qualities would not fail to lead to all sorts of changes;

but you must have support—you must be provided with some stay against which you can lean, and upon which you can depend; and that must not be an uncertain security, one resting merely upon the personal character of a despotic King."

"*Ahi, ahi!*" exclaimed the Mirza, sighing.

"You say true. My eyes see it all, as surely as my ears hear. Inshallah, please heaven, may all what you have predicted happen, and may your words prove true words."

"Great changes, gradual though they be, are said to be taking place in the Eastern world," said I, "England once being in possession of the whole of Hindustan, the same spirit of improvement which pervades her sons in their own country, will be sure to be carried to their Eastern as well as to their other vast possessions. Wherever they have dominion, they must create reforms, correct abuses, and with the blessing of Allah, produce improvement. It is as much their nature and the nature of their government to do so, as it is the nature of yours to repress individual exertion, to crush the powers of human intellect,

and to keep whole masses subservient to the interest and will of one."

"Allah ! Allah !" exclaimed the Mirza, wondering at my words. "Would to God, that such things might come to pass during my day, what a poem I would write !"

"But in the mean while," said I, "before these changes occur, let me enjoy a continuation of those delightful stories which you know so well how to invent and relate ; they produce recollections which give truth to the identity of an ancient people. I am come to hear one, for I know you must be free to-day, since the Shah is gone to hunt, and you have assured me, that you have always one in store."

"You do me much honour," said my friend ; "in truth, I was thinking of you this very day, and as I know the hour is fortunate, you could not have come more opportunely. But a circumstance has happened of which you will be happy to hear."

"In the name of Allah, what is it?" said I.

"It is this," said the Mirza ; "a discussion

took place last night at the grand vizier's, of which the Shah has obtained cognizance, and at which I, this less than the least, was present, and the subject is as follows :

"Mollah Feridoun asserted that it would be a crime, repugnant to our laws and institutions, to allow our women the same freedom as the women of Frangistan,—‘for,’ said he, ‘no man in Persia can have sufficient confidence in any one of his wives, to allow her to act for herself, and without superintendance.’ I, with that wit which Allah has bestowed upon me, took the opposite side, and a warm discussion ensued, which has given rise to the story which I am about to relate."

"It is a subject," said I, "which has occupied much of my thoughts since I have been in Persia, and I have come to the conclusion that no nation, consequently, no Mahommedan nation, can make any advance in civilization, until they emancipate their women from the thralldom, both of mind and body, in which they are held. But allow me to ask, if it be a fair question, what is the real state of the female world in Persia? We hear much of its

degradation, but it is evident little can be known that is authentic, seeing how complete and entire is the exclusion of the stranger from the interior of your harems."

With the frankness of a free and enlightened mind, which characterised my friend above his countrymen, particularly on the delicate subject of women, he answered as follows :

"Give ear," said he ; "we call the habitation of women the harem, that is 'sacred place'; but we ought better to call it the 'accursed place,' for surely it is the promoter of every bad quality in the heart, such as jealousy, cruelty, injustice, despotism, and tyranny ; in that retirement, man reigns supreme ; no one is there to dispute his authority, and who can say what may be the brutalities and horrors committed within those so called sacred places ? No women in the world are more strictly watched than ours. The seraglios of the Turks are public places in comparison. Whatever the reason of this may be is unknown. Some attribute our jealousy to the dryness of our climate, which heats the blood, and makes us full of nervous

sensibility; others, to the inhibitions of Mahomed, our prophet and legislator; who, when on his death-bed, bequeathed to us these his last words—"Keep watch over your religion and your women." Whatever may be the cause, true it is, that our women, instead of being the solace and comfort of our lives, are, in truth, our bane and misery. They are taught that their honour and virtue consist not only in unwillingness to be acquainted with man, but also in not seeing him, and not being seen by him. To that effect, they believe that in Paradise, men will have their eyes fixed on the tops of their heads, in order not to see those fair creatures, the property of others. It is impossible to affirm, even for us Persians, what passes within the walls of the royal harem. When a Shah dies, his women are lodged in a separate quarter, and there shut up for life. On that account, when that event takes place, it is succeeded by such violent grief and such manifestations of despair, that the cries of the women are heard far and near; not, indeed, indicating the love they bore the deceased, but bewailing the loss of

all future hopes of freedom. Should a weak creature of a woman be known to look at a man, the simple suspicion has become the cause of her death; her punishment for such like faults, being thrown into the grave alive. An old decrepid eunuch, more hideous than Satan, is appointed the superintendant of each department of the harem, and so great is his despotism, that the stillness of death reigns throughout the whole establishment. Loss of liberty is not the only misery endured in a harem; all sorts of abomination ensue—murders, infanticides, poisonings, and every crime which is engendered by the evil passions of the heart, when excited by injustice and oppression. The principal desire of the numerous women in the royal harem is to be married, and as that cannot take place should they be royal mothers, all their schemes tend to prevent such an event occurring. Enormities consequently ensue. When women have increased over and above, then they are married off to the right and to the left, and that is the moment most eagerly expected, as being their best chance of emanci-

ption from bondage. I could speak for ever on this agitating subject," said he, "but I have said enough to explain my feelings, and the story which I will now relate, may, perhaps, convince you that our country is as likely to produce virtuous women as good men."

Having been much interested by the words of my friend, I no more interrupted him, but allowed him to proceed, which he did as follows :

---

HISTORY OF SHAH ABBAS, THE FOOLISH  
HUSBAND AND THE VIRTUOUS WIFE.

Shah Abbas, that magnificent monarch, was a great admirer of female beauty, and there was no city, town, or village in his great empire which was not visited by his emissaries in search of charms and attractions worthy of being submitted to his inspection. But, although his seraglio was filled with the fairest beauties of Asia, still he had never yet met with one who so entirely united the fascination



of wit and intelligence to the allurements of personal charms, as wholly to captivate his heart. The grand vizier, in his sagacity, was aware that no passion is better adapted to mollify the human breast than love; and, consequently, never ceased his endeavours to discover the precise personage, who, becoming his wife, might enslave his master's affections, and who, by her prudence and intelligence added to the power of her charms, might be made subservient to the well-being of his subjects and kingdom.

At that time, in Ispahan, lived a young merchant, whose father had amassed great wealth in trade. The family was of mean origin, but riches made them ambitious, and their principal desire was to be noticed by the great. The father was wont to make large presents to the grand vizier and to others of the Shah's ministers, simply to be allowed to stand before them at their morning and evening levees; and the son, who partook largely of the parental weakness, was ever seeking opportunities of speaking and making

himself known to men of notoriety, fashion or power. This son, who was called Abdallah Beg, had lately returned to his native city from Basora, whither he had travelled upon business, and, in addition to considerable riches, had brought with him a wife. This young lady was the daughter of the first Persian merchant at Basora, and was, in truth, the most perfect creature, both in charm of person and in excellence of wit, that had been known for ages throughout the region of Mesopotamia. She had escaped the search of the King of Persia's emissaries—Basora not being within the limits of his dominions, but she was well known to them by reputation. She married Abdallah because her father was connected with his father by trade, and also because he was a handsome and well-conducted, though weak, young man, and one who could maintain her in opulence and respectability.

She was now in the zenith of her beauty; her reputation had preceded her, and when Abdallah Beg reached Ispahan, accompanying his wife, the gossip of the day led to a remark that it was well she had secured the protection

of a husband, or otherwise she would have become the prey of the Shah and his eunuch myrmidons. In truth, Shah Abbas was a man of sense and judgment, for he knew that he might tyrannise with impunity over his subjects, upon every point, excepting in matters relating to the harem. That place he religiously kept sacred in common with every Mussulman ; he had never been known to transgress himself, and was inexorable in punishing others.

Abdallah, therefore, had conducted his beautiful wife, in the perfect confidence of security, to his harem in Ispahan, and having deposited her there, he freely entered into the society of his friends, and received their congratulations on his safe return. Such congratulatory speeches were accompanied by hints, that he was well known to be the fortunate possessor of the most beautiful and accomplished wife that had ever been seen, and finding that this circumstance gave him consideration, he was led to hope, vain and time-serving as he was, with such a passport, that he might be admitted into the society of the great. He was often induced by his vanity to break through

decorum, in matters relating to women, and to boast of his unrivalled possession, and to such length did he carry his imbecility, that he became the by-word of the gay and the licentious, who did not fail to banter him in no measured terms, whilst he, proud of being noticed, felt himself honoured by their railery.

Not satisfied with associating with those of his own class, he was always thrusting himself forward among the officers and men of consequence, who thronged the gate of the royal palace, sitting whenever he was so invited, and satisfied to stand before them whenever he could attain no higher encouragement. Among such personages, Kaka pembeh,\* the King's jester, and now he might be almost called favourite, was preeminent. From the grand vizier himself to the lowest carpet-spreader, the favour of this celebrated man was sought for with eagerness. Enjoying constant access to the King's person, oftentimes one of his sayings illicit at a favourable moment, was known to make the fortune of the man

\* *Kaka pembeh* or brother Cottonwool, is the same who  
takes so conspicuous a part in our first story.

in whose favour he interfered. It became one of Abdallah's favourite objects to make himself noticed by the Kaka, and his ambition was soon gratified, for the jester, who never lost an opportunity of catering for the tastes and appetites of his royal master, having ascertained the nature of the young merchant's character, and acquired a knowledge of his history, immediately made him the object of his devoted attention.

A daily assembly took place at the gate of the royal palace of the officers and courtiers in attendance, an hour before the great selam, where the Kaka presided, and where the scandal and gossip of the day was freely discussed. One morning, observing Abdallah Beg standing in the crowd, the jester called to him by name, and requested him to step into the room and take a seat, using at the same time, words so flattering and inviting, that the vain and silly man scarcely knew whether he stood on the earth or in the heavens.

"In the name of Allah, Abdallah Beg," said the jester, "be pleased to sit. Such men as you are worthy to grace any assembly. See how handsome he is; observe his wit, his ex-

cellence—praises be said, the gate of the King is honoured by his presence. Where may some of the buffaloes be who sit in assemblies, and where such a man as our Abdallah? who, in truth, carries more sense in the nail of his little finger, than half the world in their caps.”

The devoted Abdallah, smoothing down his mustachios and beard, giving a curl to the locks which dangled behind his ear, depressing his girdle, the better to exhibit his waist, and settling himself well down in his seat, as one may perchance have seen some vain beauty do, striving for more admiration; having waited with a bashful air till the Kaka's rhapsody was over, at length ventured to look up and faintly to say,

“You are full of condescension. Whose dog am I,” he added, “that can venture to aspire to the King's gate?”

“Aspire to the King's gate, indeed!” exclaimed the Kaka; “what words are these? If you are not to look there or any where else you please, who is? Are not you the man who possesses what even the Shah does not

possess? *Bah! bah!* talk of Shahs, indeed Here is a man who goes into the country of the Arabians, who hears of a treasure in the shape of a houri of paradise, whom every body, even Kings and Pachas wish to possess, but cannot he walks in, and with those two eyes of his which you see, and with that tongue of his which you have heard, carries it off like one who strolls into a garden, selects the finest fruit, eats it and laughs at all the world around him, who stare at his good luck, whilst he coolly wipes his lips. Such is Abdallah Beg! By the salt of the Shah, by the beard of the prophet, by the souls of all our mothers and fathers, I, who am the least of dogs in this assembly, I assert, that this Abdallah is a man of whom there is not his equal in Ispahan."

Having said this, he cast his eyes around the assembly as if he really had spoken his mind in right earnest, whilst those who knew his wiles could scarcely refrain from laughter. Abdallah Beg, in the mean while, falling a victim to this palpable cajoling said:

"Your slave, begs that your condescension may never be less. All that you

have said is true—he is not without luck—whatever he has is yours—he places it at your disposal—he begs of you to accept of it. Whenever you will be pleased to honour his humble roof with your august presence, your steps will be fortunate, and you will cause his head to touch the skies.”

“Have you heard,—have you heard?” exclaimed Cottonwool. “Here is an invitation to this less than the least. By the soul of the prophet, the Kaka’s fortune is on the rise. We shall be the guests of Abdallah Beg; these are facts, not words. If I am not the rose, I shall rub myself against that which is—I shall be the bit of clay. If the nightingale be not in my hand, I shall sit under the tree in which it sings. Abdallah Beg, may your kindness never be less. I am your slave—Cottonwool kisses your feet—whenever you will command, he is ready; let it be soon, for my liver is already beginning to burn, and my heart beats with a double pulse.”

“Upon my eyes be it,” said Abdallah, unconscious of the suppressed smiles and im-



pending titters of the surrounding assembly  
“My house will be honoured. Your slave is  
full of gratitude. You are my lord, my master.  
I will go spread happiness throughout my  
family—our heads will reach the skies.”

Upon which, the infatuated man took his  
leave, his head almost touching the ground  
from excess of adulation, whilst the malicious  
Kaka and his companions, watching the pro-  
gress of his conceit, burst into uncontrollable  
laughter as soon as his back was fairly  
turned.

“You have done honour to his father’s  
grave,” said one to the jester, through the  
explosions of his merriment.

“*Mashallah*,” said a second, “in his enthu-  
siasm, he will make roast meat of his father  
and mother, and invite you to eat them.”

“Poor wretch!” exclaimed a third; “I  
never before saw so much abomination eaten  
at one meal.”

Thus was the morning passed at the royal  
gate, the Kaka extolling himself for having  
laid the foundation of a scheme which could  
not fail to prove a source of entertainment to

the Shah, whilst, at the same time, he secured to himself an increase of influence and approbation.

In the mean while, the devoted Abdallah strutted away from the assembly, at least, one peg taller than before. He scarcely knew how to comport himself—he could not sufficiently vibrate his nether body, nor swing his arms to and fro. His cap ran the chance of falling off his head from excess of obliquity, and he curled his moustachio so fiercely upwards, that his meek face was scarcely to be recognised; he passed his mercantile acquaintances on the full swing, scarcely deigning to bestow upon them more than a protecting nod, whilst to those who were above him in station, he did not fail to announce, that “Kaka Pembeh,” so he now familiarly called him, had promised to dine with him. He straightway began to calculate the future advantages likely to accrue from this circumstance, and ere he had reached the gate of his house, in imagination, he had fairly installed his person at court, as one of the King’s lords in waiting, at least, if not a future secretary of state.

Having entered, he called aloud for his father. His father was a foolish vain old man by name Mirza Bauker, which his friends had changed into Mirza *Bakhúr*, or 'the Mirza with an ass', and so he was commonly called, particularly when associated with his silly son. Having found him, Abdallah, in a state of considerable excitement, immediately imparted the great news, emphatically announcing that the King's favourite was to dine with him on the succeeding day.

"By your soul," said the son, "what I say is true. He told me so himself, and now we must see what is to be done."

"Done!" said the father, "we shall not be men if we do not give him an entertainment that will drive all the wind out of his head. He must speak of it to the King. We must be spoken of before the King; men must know what we are."

"They must, they must," said Abdallah; "after all, the blessed prophet was a man before he was a prophet. We also are men—we shall be something too. But what shall we do?"

"Do?" said the father; "we must invite people. There cannot be an entertainment without guests. We must invite Agar Joher, the goldsmith for one; may his house be ruined!—he shall see what the family of Mirza Banker can do. He shall swallow his envy and his pride too, a thousand times and more, before we have done with him."

"Yes," said the son, "and that burnt father, Aga Yusuf, who thinks himself the greatest merchant of Ispahan; he must come, if it be only to make him burst with mortification. Then we must have the great men of the court. Why should we not ask the prime vizier himself? He went to Pól Ali Beg, the great money-broker, why should he not come to us? We are richer than he is, with all his two golden pipes and five silver basins and ewers."

"You do not say amiss," rejoined the father; "if so, we must have fire-works and the *bazigers* or dancing-women."

"Hear my word," said the son, deep in thought, "we must have a new sofra, or table-cloth. I saw some beautiful ones in the bazaar, with excellent mottoes."

“What do you say,” said the father, “are you mad? New sofras indeed! What becomes of our respectability and hospitality? You are young; don’t you know that the older the table-cloth, the more respectable the family? I would not pick a grain of rice from off our old family cloth on any account. You are young, Abdallah, and do not know the world.”

“So be it,” said the young man, “if so it is; but how is the dinner to be managed?”

“Stop—hear,” said the old man. “At Pûl Ali Beg’s dinner, there were only three pillos and one chilo to each khonchah.\* Now we will have five pillos—by the beard of the blessed Ali; by the death of the accursed Yezid, we will have five pillos to each khonchah, and one roasted lamb. We will burn Pûl Ali Beg’s father, and make Aga Yusuf’s liver drop.”

“Oh my, Sir, you have ordained right,” said Abdallah, in a trance of joy. “Wonderful

\* Pillo—dressed rice. Chilo—plainly boiled rice. Khonchah—a tray.

things have you said! Yes," looking thoughtful and counting his fingers, "let me see, that will make in all about fifty pillos and ten lambs—that will be enough to make the whole body of those unblessed merchants turn pale with envy, and every calumniating burnt father will choak with rage. But what of the sherbets? what of the fruit? what of the other dishes? Who will direct that part of the feast?"

"We must ask your mother," said Mirza Banker. "Mashallah! she is famous at invention, and she will superintend the whole of the cookery."

"By the soul of my father," exclaimed Abdallah, "I will go seek Fatmeh. If there is an intellect to be found in the world, she possesses it. She understands every thing. She holds men in her power by the magic of her eye, and obliges them to do what she requires by the influence of her tongue."

Upon this, he betook himself to the anderoon, or women's apartments, in search of his wife, and there seated, he found her surrounded by her women, to one of whom she was teaching the art of embroidery. We have already

said that so eminent a beauty and so perfect a wife, both in character and intelligence, had not been known in Persia for ages ; and although words, perhaps, may not convey an idea of her excellence, still we think it right to attempt to sketch her portrait. She was a little above the middle size, neither tall nor short, and maintained a most dignified demeanour, which was greatly enhanced by the natural grace of her manner ; her head was set with peculiar symmetry upon a curving neck ; and her face, which was oval, seemed to have been moulded in a form that no poet ever could have imagined, not even in his dreams, and which must have been the handy-work of peries or jins. Her skin was like the finest satin, her veins being seen to circulate like rivulets running through the conduits of a flower-garden. Her hair was of so beautiful a colour, that it required no *khenna* to keep it in order, and flowed from her head in inconvenient profusion. Who can describe her features ? Her eyes were the seat of tenderness as well as of fire, her mouth bespoke virtue and truth, and there beamed from her

whole person such an atmosphere of loveliness, that no one ever approached her without feeling its influence. To all this perfection, and it would have been of little worth without it, was added such a power of good sense, sound judgment, and brilliant wit, that in speaking to her, the hearer forgot the woman, and listened as to a sage. Her conduct was a living exposition of her principles, which were founded upon every thing pure and virtuous. Her only fault, perhaps, was being too inflexible in pursuing that which was right, and in exacting too much from others in conformity to her own views.

Such then was Fatmeh, the beautiful, the virtuous and the accomplished wife to Abdallah, the silly, the vain, and the feeble of mind and of purpose. Delighted at having become acquainted with the royal jester, and almost out of his senses with joy at the prospect of receiving him as his guest, thus rendering himself conspicuous in the city by the banquet he was about to give, he could scarcely give utterance to his feelings when he appeared before his wife.



“Light of my eyes,” he exclaimed, “give ear!—a wonderful piece of good luck has befallen us. We shall cease being of little importance in Ispahan, and you will never have to complain that your husband is nothing. I have struck up such a friendship with the Shah’s companion and favourite, that he is about to honour our house with his presence, and we are to give him an entertainment. Fatmeh, my soul, you must give us the advantage of your knowledge and zeal. Tell us how shall we prepare for the feast?”

As soon as Fatmeh heard these words, seriousness overcast her countenance, and she said :

“Your slave is ever ready to obey the wishes of her lord and master, and who is she that should venture to object when he ordains? but let her venture to suggest, that mortification or even disgrace is sure to ensue, when they in humble life, seek to raise themselves to the level of their superiors. What good can you reap from becoming the friend of the royal favourite? He is a laugher at beards by profession, and can you expect that he will

spare yours? He may have mischievous views—no one can laugh much without heaving a sigh afterwards.”

“What words are these?” said Abdallah.

“Am I nothing after all? Are riches nothing? Is the possessor of beauty such as thine nothing? Fear not; why should not Abdallah raise himself in the world as well as those who throng the Shah’s gate? You will see! you will see! Only let us give a good feast, and all will go well.”

“Your slave,” said Fatmeh, “has but one wish, and that is, that your house may prosper; but she hopes that as we are now, so we may be this time next year.”

“Fear not,” said her husband. “Please Allah, our luck is on the rise; let us begin our preparations.”

Long were the consultations and great the efforts made to provide a fitting entertainment for the reception of the much celebrated Kaka Pembeli. There was one point which Fatmeh succeeded in carrying (much alas! to her future regret), and that was to restrict the nature of the entertainment to something

infinitely more private than the one which Abdallah and his father had originally planned, and this, indeed, suited the views of the Kaka himself, as will hereafter be seen.

Abdallah paid the compliment of requesting the jester to invite his own party, and at the hour appointed, proceeded in person to bid him to the feast. Honours, almost royal, were prepared for his reception, and a stepping-carpet of rich cloths and stuffs would actually have been spread for him by old Mirza Bauker, so intense was his capacity for adulation, had he not been warned that should such proceedings come to the Shah's ears, he might visit the perpetrators thereof with his vengeance. However, a separate musnud was doubled up purposely for the seat of the Kaka, and bowls of fruit were placed near it within reach of his hand. A messenger preceded the procession to announce its approach, when Mirza Bauker, at the head of the servants, advanced to the gate of the house in order to receive their illustrious guest as he dismounted from his horse. The Kaka came attended by one of the Shah's principal

runchs, by the head of the valets, (always a personage of consequence), by two *mastofies* or scribes of the royal gate, and by the Nasakchi Bashi, the chief executioner, who being a man of pleasure, brought with him a band of dancers and singers, accompanied by a confidential servant, who conveyed under his cloak several bottles of wine, a liquor which, in defiance of the law, was almost openly drunk by the court as well as by the Shah himself, although denounced as an abomination by the priests.

Thus the entertainment from being an exhibition of the wealth of the house Mirza Bauker, dwindled in fact into a private drinking party. No sooner was the Kaka seated, than he poured forth such a rhapsody of praise and admiration at everything he saw, and all that had been done for his reception, that the head of Abdallah and of his silly old father almost touched the skies from excess of delight.

"Bah! bah! bah!" exclaimed the Jester, "are we on earth or in paradise, or have we been raised to the seventh heaven. By the soul of your son and by the beard of the Shah,"

said he addressing Mirza Bauker, "my head goes round and round with astonishment—see what a house! what fruits! what carpets—and see what a master of the house! Look too, what a father to the master of the house, and could we look back; (may the holy prophet take them into his holy keeping,) see what grand-fathers and great grand-fathers!"

All the accompanying guests did not fail to exclaim:

"Beli! beli! true, true you say right—we also are surprised and delighted."

Then turning to Abdallah he said,

"We are grateful, we are your servants—may the fortunes of your house flourish—may your shadow never be less—we! what dirt are we, compared to the shadow under which we sit! The Shah shall certainly be informed what a worthy subject he possesses in our excellent Abdallah Aga."

Upon this, the foolish man made the lowest prostrations, accompanied by a torrent of flattering speeches. The dinner being served, he seated himself at the very extremity of the carpet, in an attitude of humility, and occa-

sionally performed the offices of a servant. Little was said whilst eating was in progress, and that little was mostly in allusion to the sly and copious draughts of wine which were administered to the chief executioner, who excused himself from this deviation contrary to the ordinances of the law, by affirming that the doctors had ordered the prescribed liquor for his health.

"The Mollah Baski is a bad doctor," said one.

"May his father burn," said another. "He allows no wine though I be on my death bed" said a third.

And so they conversed until the dinner was over; when the wine was handed about freely and without disguise. The assembled faces in consequence of their potations began to look very red and discomposed.

It was at this stage of the entertainment, when the table-cloth had been rolled up and taken away, the kalia introduced, that the Kaka began to banter his host upon his wife.

"That gem of perfection," said he, "which

report announces to be so brilliant, is contained within the walls of this anderoon. Give ear," he continued, as with animation of voice and action he addressed those around him, Abdallah being within hearing, "the Khanum, is the mistress of such entire perfection, that had I two hundred eyes instead of two, I could never enough sate them with gazing upon her charms—had I five hundred ears, I could never sufficiently give ear to the harmony of her voice and the accents of her tongue—had I a million of lips, I could never enough kiss the print of her footsteps, so full of dignity and majesty is her whole person and demeanour. Such are the reports spread abroad of her perfections, which we, alas! poor ill-fated wretches! are only allowed to dream of, like one who scents a rose garden from the outer side of the wall, without being allowed to enter. There, there, is the man," pointing to Abdallah, "there is the happy man that possesses all, sees all, and hears all—he enjoys that which the Shah himself can never enjoy!"

Abdallah hearing these words, made an exclamation, expressive of his humility, but at the same time enjoyed transports of delight, whilst unwittingly he seconded the treacherous scheme of his wily guest. He longed to enhance the triumph of possession, by exhibiting to him that treasure and its perfections.

"What can your slave say?" said Abdallah with a downcast look, "our fate has thus been ordained, yes in truth your slave possesses a jewel of inestimable worth—she is not a being of this earth, she ought to be an inhabitant of that paradise for which we all are striving; she ought to be seen, and then men would own that I do not lie, but that I speak less than the truth."

"Let us see, let us see," exclaimed the Kaka with animation; "feasting after this manner," pointing to the departing delicacies is one thing, "but feasting the eye-sight is another—as you are a man, and as we all are friends together, as you love your soul, let our eyes be refreshed by the sight of this paragon of beauty. I, your slave will kiss your feet, I will be your sacrifice—do not say no."



“ We are all hungry for the sight,” said the Nasakchi.

“ Let us see this rose, the scent thereof comes to us even through these walls,” said the scribe.

The eunuch was the only one who appeared shocked at this trespass, upon what he esteemed his peculiar province.

The weak Abdallah, intoxicated with adulation and besotted with vanity, arose in ecstasy of joy, and darting forth from the apartment, betook himself with hastened, though uncertain steps, to that of his wife, his still more infatuated father following close behind him. When they reached her presence, it was there all at once, that they were struck by the folly of their errand, and they suddenly became aware of the entire dignity of Fatmeh's character. They stopped short and faltered in their speech, when she relieved them from their embarrassment by asking them what had happened.

“ What supplication can we make,” said Abdallah, “ excepting this, that you will come and rejoice all our hearts by yielding

to our entreaties, and to the wishes of our guests."

"Yes," said Mirza Bauker, "allow men to worship you—we are come with a supplication."

"My soul—light of my eyes," added Abdallah, "if you wish to raise our fortunes and make our heads touch the skies, allow our guests to depart satisfied—come with us into the *mejlis*, the assembly."

On hearing the import of these words, Fatmeh turned red and white by turns, her breast heaved, her eyes became fixed, she could scarcely speak from astonishment and disgust.

"For the love of Allah," at length she exclaimed, "are you both mad? what words are these? where have you been that you come to me with such a request. Has wine inflamed your minds, and has wind got into your brain instead of sense? I am your wife Abdallah Aga? am I your daughter-in-law Mirza Bauker? is it your wish to treat me as one infamous and debased? are we not in a Mahommedan coun-

try? is not this a Mussulman's harem? have we not a religion? a King and a government, and do you come requesting me to act as if none of those blessings existed. Go, go—shame, shame—I am your wife 'tis true, Abdallah, and whatever is lawful, whatever is dutiful, whatever is honest in the sight of God and man that will I do; but to go with you into a public assembly of men, there to shew my face like the wicked woman at the corner of the street, and there to be gazed upon—leered at—and thus inflict a stigma upon myself and on your house—that I cannot consent to do.”

“But reflect,” said her husband, “reflect, what a distinction it will be to have it known that Abdallah possesses a jewel, such as even Kings do not possess—what consideration he will acquire when it is said that he is the envy of the whole city! How much he will be courted, sought after and invited;—consider, Fatmeh, that you will be the cause of all this prosperity, of all this triumph over our enemies. Why the Shah himself will envy me! I shall be

called to court—I shall stand before the asylum of the world—think of that.”

“We shall burn the fathers of all the enviers in the bazaar, and Mirza Bauker will not have his equal,” said the old fool of a father.

“Shame! shame!” again exclaimed the indignant Fatmeh, “are these considerations to be put into competition with honour—with the express commands of our holy religion. There can be no exaltation allied with contempt—as well may you say that the thief who is suspended on a tree is exalted! I am your wife, and a husband has full power over her person—therefore, if you make use of force I must obey—but as you value the reputation of an upright man and a good Mussulman, let me entreat of you to desist from this your purpose.”

Upon saying which, she seized upon a veil which was near at hand, threw it over her head, and in disgust seated herself in a distant corner of the room.

Father and son being foiled in their mission, departed with downcast looks, and with less haste than when they came.

“What shall we say?” said Abdallah to his

father on the way, "we return without caps to our heads."

"Say?" said Mirza Bauker, "say, although she is a beauty, she is yet still a woman, and that because we require her to go one way, she will go the other. What else can we say?"

"But we shall be laughed at," said the other.

"Let them laugh," rejoined the old man, "the laugh is on our side, for they have not succeeded in their wishes, whatever we may have done in ours."

Upon this they entered the room.

"What has happened?" roared out the King's jester. "Is it or is it not?"

"It is not," said Abdallah. "The weak one refuses to come."

"Well done, O little woman!" exclaimed the eunuch, his eye lighting up in ecstasy, on hearing an instance of virtue in his department, which, in his mind's eye, he almost esteemed to be a miracle. "Wonderful weak one must she be! In truth, in truth, the Shah does not possess such a treasure—to be beautiful, and to resist the temptation of exhibiting that

beauty! Such virtue is unknown! As you love your eyes," said he, addressing Abdallah, "you must allow me to see her, in order that I may make a report to the asylum of the universe. I can never be denied access to any *anderoon*."

"No more can I," exclaimed Cottonwool. "See this hump. See this dog-face of mine. I may be allowed to run loose among all the harems in Ispahan, without doing any harm, except, perhaps, scaring the women out of their wits; for your slave is not counted among men. With your permission," pointing to the eunuch, "this aga and I will accompany you to pay our respects to this miracle of womankind. The Shah must not remain in ignorance of the existence of one so exalted, and you, Abdallah Aga, you must be duly honoured too. Rise—let us go."

The bewildered host was taken so unawares by this request, that he immediately led the way, followed by the Kaka and the royal eunuch, his father bringing up the rear, very much to the amusement of the remainder of the guests, who being intimately acquainted with the wiles

and the vocation of the Kaka, could perceive that all this proceeding, apparently so unpremeditated, had been planned and pre-arranged.

Fatmeh having, as she supposed, got rid of the importunities of her husband, had taken off her veil, and quietly resumed her usual avocations, when suddenly the door of her apartment was thrown open, and as suddenly appeared before her the Kaka, followed by the eunuch, Abdallah, and her father-in-law. Her first impulse was to scream and seek her veil; not, however, before the intruders had had full time to survey the beauties of her person and the charms of her incomparable face. She then covered herself over with that garment, and turning her back upon her visitors, seated herself in a corner, without deigning to utter a word.

“Forgive us,” said the Kaka, entirely charmed by what he had seen, “forgive us, O beautiful and incomparable lady, for this intrusion; but let our humble deformities plead in our favour. You see before you as ugly and disgusting an object as you can well require; one whose hump makes it doubtful whether he approaches you back foremost or stomach fore-

most—one whose eye cares not for its fellow, but looks whithersoever it pleases without asking permission of its neighbour—one whose legs are always across, sitting or standing, and whose knees must kneel, whether he be humble or whether he be arrogant. And in his companion, he humbly presents you one, who boasts of having already frightened seven children into fits by his hideousness ; who is of less account in a harem than a masculine cat, and who enjoys the sentiment of hate with the same devotedness that others enjoy that of love. Look upon us, therefore, O lady without compare, and teach us, by deigning to cast an eye upon us, properly to demean ourselves as two of the choicest specimens of the scum of this our blessed earth."

Fatneh, who was as little prepared for the appearance of such a being, as she was for the strange speech with which he had introduced himself and his companion, could scarcely keep her gravity, as she eyed them both from the corner of her veil. She allowed a pause to intervene, when she said :



“Sirs, in whatever light you may choose to view the matter, you must allow that a visit such as this is quite unusual, and that, however, your humble slave may be flattered by the manner in which you have been pleased to express yourself, and gratified by the opinion you entertain of her poor merits, still she must protest against so unheard of an act, and request you to retire.”

Abdallah, taking courage by the composure of her manner, then said:

“Whatever may be the evil of this proceeding, it is annulled by the presence of your husband and father-in-law. By my soul and by your death, these my friends, in coming hither, afford me a proof of their affection, and through their means, my good fortune will *Inshallah* be on the rise. Therefore, throw off your veil, and let them depart satisfied. Milord eunuch here, is one who specially stands before the asylum of the world, comptrolling the royal harem and all the faces it contains, without the intervention of veils; therefore what harm can there be in unveiling before him?”

"May my lips kiss the sole of your slippers! may the dust of your threshold be ointment for my eyes!" exclaimed the Kaka, inflamed to admiration by the beauty of the tones of Fatmeh's voice, and the fascination of her manner. "Should this flower of the harem deign to extend the prolongation of my life, by infusing the exhalations of her beauty into my unworthy person, I will never cease being grateful for her condescension."

"Let us see your face, O my lady!" said the eunuch, using language common to his profession. "What words are these? Delay is now affectation. We, who are your lawful guardians, we give you leave—there is no harm done; collect your fears into a heap and blow them from you."

With such encouragement as this, Fatmeh, seeing in fact nothing before her, but two creatures in form scarcely human, at length, was prevailed upon to draw off her veil, and then turning her face modestly towards them, allowed them to gaze upon her charms at their leisure.

The Kaka's eyes glistened with admiration, and in his mind he foresaw the success he was about to obtain in the good graces of the sovereign, for having brought to light so wonderful a specimen of beauty and wit.

"*Mashallah ! Mashallah !*" he exclaimed, again and again. "May the father of all destiny be burnt, for having kept such riches from the harem of the King of Kings. *Mashallah !* You, Abdallah Aga ! you ought to be made the vizier of the state, and empower your bewitching fairy to rule over the hearts of man."

As for the eunuch, he eyed the beautiful person before him, not with a feeling of admiration, but with the eye of envy, wishing to find such fault, that he might depart satisfied she was not superior to those of the Shah's beauties, over whom he had the charge. "She is not amiss ! There is nothing to say against her ! In truth she has merit ! Splendid she is, 'tis true, but she may fall away. Should the Shah gain a sight of her, it may go ill with us." These, and such like observations, passed through his mind as he gazed upon her, whilst

in truth he would willingly have given his eyes to be the means of presenting her to his royal master.

At length the interview drew to a close, and Kaka Pembek, having accomplished the object he had in view in becoming the guest of Abdallah, returned to his home quite overjoyed with his success. As he placed his foot in the stirrup, on leaving Abdallah's house, he did not cease to make protestations of friendship, returning him thanks for the handsome manner in which he had been entertained, hinting that this would not be the last time he should call upon him for hospitality, particularly as he had a friend, one high at court, whom he wished to introduce to his notice.

Abdallah, who actually held the stirrup as he mounted, avowed himself the humblest of his slaves, whose head had been made to touch the skies by this stretch of his condescension. When the whole party was fairly gone, he exclaimed to his father :

“By the soul of the Shah, I shall be allowed to stand in the royal presence at the next festival of Norooz; and who knows, perhaps we may both of us be invested with dresses of

honour. This the Kaka told me in confidence ; in the mean while he promises to bring to us one of the greatest men of the court, who is as intimate with the Shah as it is possible for one man to be with another. Our luck is on the rise. I will defile the grave of Pól Ali Beg's father."

"We will show the world," said the vain-glorious old man, "that the house of Mirza Bauker has not its equal in the bazaar."

The King's jester was not slow in making his proceedings known to his royal master. He long had felt that something more than mere buffoonery was necessary to excite his mind, and draw it away from that power of melancholy which habitually oppressed it, and he had now discovered precisely the sort of person, in the wife of Abdallah, one likely to promote this object, and acquire entire ascendancy over him. This circumstance he communicated to the grand vizier, who, although a very rigid Mussulman himself, and singularly alive to the sanctity of the harem, still could not help encouraging him to proceed, particularly as he could quiet his conscience, by asserting that when a husband was party concerned

in introducing others to his wife, he must be held responsible for the consequences.

On the morning subsequent to Abdallah's entertainment, the Kaka having arrayed himself in his court dress, proceeded to the private apartments of the Shah, and being one of those privileged to stand before the presence without introduction, entering he made his obeisance, as usual, without any particular notice being taken of him. However, after a while, he lifted up his voice, and said :

"I have a petition to make."

His Majesty, who guessed the nature of his communication, ordered every one else to quit his presence, and then said :

"What is the news? Speak?"

"As I am your sacrifice," said the Kaka, "your slave has seen strange things—things worthy the observation of the King of Kings."

"What has happened? What things?" said the Shah. "Should you throw unmeaning words into the air, open well your eyes, for this is a day in which the King enjoys no spirits."

"By the salt of the King!—by his own soul!—by his royal ancestors!—there I have

said it—what your slave is about to advance is the truth. There is not a lie in the whole story and he has witnesses, should it be necessary, to prove what he asserts.”

“Speak on,” said the Shah.

“May my head fall,” said the Kaka, “if what I saw last night be not true, and fitted for the service of the King. This less than the least; having heard that one Abdallah, son of Mirza Bauker, a merchant trading to Bassora, had returned from that city, bringing with him a maiden more beautiful than any thing that had ever been seen in our days, more full of wit, and sparkling with salt of every kind, I thought it right for the service of the Shah to become acquainted with him, saying to myself, ‘What right has a burnt father to possess that which only belongs to the Shah of Shabs?’ Your slave did become acquainted with him, and by the salt which I eat, and by the King’s head I swear, that a more considerable ass (always saving your royal presence) was never seen. One wish he has, and one only wish, and that is to be allowed to stand in the presence of the world’s centre. He is wealthy; he also pos-

esses one essential ass in a father, Mirza Bauker by name, who only lives to rub his forehead against the imperial threshold. May I be your sacrifice, but I lost no time in making play under their beards. In two words, then, your slave has succeeded in eating their bread, and by the head of the King, by words ill or well spoken, by praises ill or well bestowed, he made them both press upon him a visit, to survey this maiden without an equal."

"Well," said the Shah, excited by what he heard, "well, what happened? Did you see her? What is she like?"

"It is not for a thing like your slave to boast what he has seen," said the Kaka, "but in truth this I may say—and I swear it by the King's head, by the royal jika, and by my own death—that such a thing, composed of flesh and blood, has not been seen in Persia since the days of Jemsheed. Leila what? Shireen what? They are both filth compared to her. Such a person—such eyes—such skin—such colouring—such a waist! No; the like was never seen! And then such incomparable wit. She says more witty things in a minute, than all



the sages of the King's gate in a year. Who was Hafiz? Who was Nizami? Who was Saadi? She is them altogether. In truth, then, she is only fit for the royal harem? There she must go. Let the Centre of the Universe cut his slave's tongue out, but till that happens he can never cease to speak of her perfections."

Shah Abbas was not slow in catching the enthusiasm which filled the breast of his jester, as he continued extolling the beauties of Abdallah's wife, although, in truth, his Majesty remained impressed with the idea that this prodigy was in no other manner connected with the young merchant than by the ties of slavery. The Kaka had purposely so described her, lest the Shah, in his desire to uphold the sacred character of the harem, should refuse to proceed further in the business; but having sufficiently awakened the curiosity of his master into a desire to see her, he immediately unfolded the scheme he had already planned of a second visit. Accordingly, on that very night, the Shah agreed to disguise himself as one belonging to the royal household, and to accom-

pany his jester to the house of Abdallah, without giving him any previous notice, in order that no notoriety might be attached to the visit.

Shah Abbas was a handsome man, with a round face, aquiline nose, and sharp piercing eyes. In his day it was the fashion to clip the beard short, wearing the mustachios long, different to the custom of the present time, when no beard can be too copious. His face was well known, for he never refused to show himself to his people; consequently, he deemed it necessary, in this instance, to disguise himself by wearing some head-dress, which would change the character of his usual appearance. Having adopted a large gold brocade turban, and a costume common to courtiers and khans, he issued from his palace, at the dusk of the evening, accompanied by Cottonwool, and followed at a short distance by a trusty executioner, who on such like expeditions was so stationed as to be ready to act upon the first emergency.

They quietly bent their way to Abdallah's house, and when there, knocked at the door,

which, although standing open during the day, was closed at night. As soon as the servant, by the light of a lantern, discovered the Kaka, he immediately ran in all haste to inform his master, who was solacing himself in the anderoon with the society of his beautiful wife.

“What has happened?” said he, as soon as he perceived his servant standing before him breathless from haste.

“By your life,” said the man, “the great Kaka, who was here last night, has again appeared, followed by another aga, and requests to see you.”

Fatmeh, who heard these words, did not know what countenance to keep, amused on the one hand, by the recollection of the ridiculous appearance of her husband’s new friend, and on the other, fearful lest he should again require to be admitted into the harem. Abdallah, on the other hand, received the news with unmixed joy.

“He has brought me one of the great men of the court,” he exclaimed. “See! see!—did I not say our luck was on the rise?”

Then ordering lights to be placed in the

divan khaneh, or public room, he hastened with the utmost speed to receive his guests. He rushed forward to Cottonwood, and bowing low before him, without taking the least notice of the King, exclaimed,

“You have done me honour—I am your slave—your steps are fortunate! You have no illness, let us hope? Enter, in the name of Allah. Forgive the meanness of the habitation of your slave. Why did you not give me notice of your arrival? we would have prepared for your reception. Who am I, that I should be thus honoured?”

And thus did he proceed in a rhapsody of welcome and compliments, till he could scarcely speak for want of breath. Abdallah then observing the unbounded respect which the Kaka paid to his companion, became frightened at his own want of deference, and made similar demonstrations of compliment and adulation, until at length he succeeded in seating them in his receiving-room.

Abdallah would have placed the Kaka in the seat of honour; but when he perceived that the stranger, without the smallest hesitation, took

upon himself the distinction due to the highest rank, he became puzzled how to behave, lest in bestowing too much attention upon the one, he should displease the other. He was about ordering refreshments to be brought, when the Kaka said :

“ Abdallah Aga ! If you are a man, and would give pleasure to your guests, let us repair to your anderoon. I speak as your friend ; and by the King’s head I swear, that in so doing you will secure an act of condescension which the greatest man in the kingdom cannot secure. Comport yourself as if the Shah himself were here, and do not fear.”

The bewildered man, scarcely knowing whether he was walking in air or on earth, afraid on the one hand that Fatmeh would exhibit her indignation in some unbecoming manner, and apprehensive on the other of offending his friend, the Kaka, and particularly the stranger, of whom he began to stand in serious awe, at length exclaimed :

“ *Becheshm*—by my eyes !—upon my head be it—I am your sacrifice. Whatever you command, your slave will do. I will run to

make preparations. Forgive us. Had we but been made aware of this honour"—

And he would have left his visitors to go to prepare his wife, had not the wily Kaka foreseen, should they not take Fatmeh unawares, they might not see her at all, said :

"Stay—stay—we require no preparations ; we will proceed with you,"—when both rising, they followed the scarcely willing Abdallah into his own sacred retreat.

Fatmeh, who had become wise from experience, no sooner saw her husband run to receive the Kaka and the stranger, than she called for her veil, and covered herself therewith from head to foot, as if she were about to appear in the streets, thus preparing herself for the worst ; and when she heard footsteps approach, she quitted her apartment in which she usually sat, and betook herself to another adjoining.

Abdallah, perceiving that his wife had fled, began to make apologies, and requesting his guests to be seated, said that he would seek and conduct her before them. With great diffi-

culty he persuaded her to follow him, but no words would induce her to take off her veil. Long had the Kaka and his companion to wait, and many were the King's expressions of surprise, that a mere slave should be so refractory to the orders of her master. At length she entered the room, keeping herself so closely concealed that no one part of her person, not even the tip of a finger, could be perceived. The Kaka, seeing that nothing could be done without his interference, and having received permission from the Shah to put himself forward, advanced towards her, and touching the ground with his hand, and then bringing it to his lips, exclaimed :

“What can your slave say? You are like the loadstone. I am the bit of metal that you have attracted—and here is another,” pointing to the Shah. “You make slaves of mankind. We have been ordered to see and ascertain whether the words which your humble slave has spoken before the Asylum of the Universe, the Shah of this great country, be true or not. Impressed by what he saw last night, he ventured to assert

that in the royal harem, and, indeed, throughout Persia, not to mention the whole world, there cannot and does not exist one of charms so unrivalled, and of wit so ready and universal, as you, O lady, most fair—most unequalled. Let this Aga, pointing to the Shah, be my witness—allow him to judge—allow him to take the report of my assertion to the ears of his Majesty; and unless you require the diminution of my ears, the curtailment of my nose, or the loan of one of my eyes, exhibit the goodness of your heart, by divesting yourself of that cruel and hateful veil. You will thus protect your slave from harm, and enjoy yourself immortal glory.”

“Sir,” said Fatmeh, the tones of her voice bewitching to the ear, thrilling through the very hearts of her auditors; “Sir, if it hath pleased Heaven to bestow the beauty and charms of person to your slave which you have been pleased to describe, she must deplore the possession of them as her greatest misfortune, if they are to be the cause of seducing her from what she knows and feels to be her duty.



Whatever they may be, were she a thousand times more beautiful, were she one of the blessed houris herself, such charms, when once they belong to another, can no longer belong to herself. She is slave to the man whom destiny has made her master. His will is her law. Whilst she is ready to throw off her veil, should he positively command her, yet so imperative are the obligations of her religion, and the received customs of decency, that she is quite sure he never would require her to disgrace her sex, and his own family, by issuing an order which is only intended to satisfy the idle curiosity of strangers."

Upon this, she was about turning to go away, when the Shah, enraptured by her voice, her manner, and the grace of her movements, cried :

"Stay, for the sake of Allah, stay. You have heard the words of Kaka Pembeh, and we must hope they will have some effect upon you. Since the real object of our coming hither is to please the Shah—will not that have some effect upon your determination?"

"Forgive me if I say," said Fatmeh, "that

I fear under this request there lieth deceit. What can so great a monarch care for one so lowly as your slave? He who possesses, in right of his power, all the beauty which his immense kingdom can bestow, and who enslaves the hearts of his subjects by his goodness and munificence, will scarcely condescend to look into the anderoon of individuals of our humble station. No, Sir Kaka, and you, Sir stranger, let me entreat of you to allow me to retire, and be not angry if I can in no wise comply with your wishes."

"One word more," said the monarch, in haste and with great animation. "Suppose you were to receive an order from the Shah himself, would you obey?"

"What words are these?" answered Fatmeh. "What can the Shah have to seek in this house?—it is useless to affirm that we are all his slaves, over whom he has the power of life and death, and, therefore, an anderoon has no walls for him; but this I say, that even were he present, such is my opinion of his justice, that he never would command

that which is contrary to good morals and decency.”

Shah Abbas was by this time quite entranced with the fascinations of the beautiful woman, though he had not seen her face, and seeing that she was determined to depart, notwithstanding the tacit entreaties of her husband, who was in so bewildered a state, that he neither knew what to do or say, at length exclaimed, with an authoritative tone and manner :

“In the name of the Shah then, I order you to stay. I am the Shah.”

At these words, all present fell at his feet; his person now was not to be mistaken, for there is that in despotic kings which can never be concealed, and the scene which ensued is easier to be imagined than described. Abdallah almost fainted away between the extremes of fear and joy—fear lest he might have done something worthy of death—joy at the great and inexpressible honour of seeing the King, in person, under his roof. Fatmeh was overpowered by fear and apprehension; for quick as a shock of

electricity, she alas ! felt what alone could be the motive which had conducted him hither, and remained prostrate until the Shah advanced and lifting her up, requested her, at the same time, in gentle and encouraging accents to retire, and return to him unveiled. His Majesty then ordered Abdallah to accompany her, and to bring her back to him so soon as she would be ready to appear.

“See what you have done!” said the dejected wife to her husband when they were left together. “Did not I tell you that the visit of that intriguing hump-back would end in misfortune?”

“In misfortune !” exclaimed Abdallah, “in misfortune do you say ? As you live, find the man in Ispahan who has ever been half so much honoured as I. Misfortune do you say ? On the contrary, call it joy—call it good destiny. Your husband will be somebody now ; he will have a footing at court ; men will bow the head to him ; he will stand before the King.”

“Are you so blind, Abdallah,” cried his wife, in anger, “as not to perceive the real

object of these attentions and of these visits. I tell you that your wife will be dishonoured; you are preparing every mischief for your house, by your vanity and love of consideration. I, a poor weak woman, how am I to resist, if I be not supported by him who ought to support me?"

"Fear not," said Abdallah, "and make haste. Go deck yourself in your best, fresh paint your eyes and twist your curls. Let us do honour to our visitor, and come quickly that we may fall at his feet. And as you love my soul, keep your eyes open, and make all the play you can with that tongue and those eyes of yours."

Fatmeh, surprized, excited, and disgusted with the want of proper feeling in her husband, was not long in taking off her veil, putting on a suitable dress, and rejoining her husband. He then took her by the hand and led her straight before the Shah.

When Shah Abbas perceived her, his eyes became rivetted by the brilliancy of her beauty. He could not speak from astonishment, and he gazed like one who had never seen beauty

before. The Kaka watched the effect produced upon his royal master with intense interest, and when he perceived how much he was smitten, he could scarcely contain his raptures at the success which had followed his schemes. His cunning eyes glanced first at the King and then at Fatmeh, as a serpent may be seen to watch his prey before he effectually darts upon it.

"Report has not said enough," said the enamoured King. "We are all astonishment! Lady, be seated," he said, addressing Fatmeh, "and allow your humble slave to gaze upon charms, the like to which, hitherto are unknown to his eyes."

Upon saying this, he insisted upon her being seated, whilst her husband stood by, wrapt in stolid satisfaction and stupid insensibility, his heart almost beating into his very mouth. Fatmeh, on the contrary, quickly alive to the disgrace of the position in which she was placed, could scarcely retain the expression of her anger and her tears. At the same time, having all proper respect for the character of the great monarch who was seated

near her, she did her best to contain her real emotions, and shewed her deference by maintaining silence, accompanied by down-cas retiring looks.

We will not repeat the conversation that took place between the Shah and Fatmeh, for it may be better imagined than described, consisting, on the part of the Shah, of attempts to make her elicit that wit and agreeableness for which she was celebrated, and she on her part, abstaining from pronouncing any thing beyond expressions of respect and devotion. The interview lasted long, for the enamoured Abbas could not draw himself away from attractions such as those before him. He avowed the admiration with which she had inspired him, and placed before her views of ambition, which alone would have been sufficient to seduce any ordinary mortal from the paths of rectitude. But Fatmeh was an extraordinary woman; in her own breast, she would listen to no compromise with duty; virtue was the only course she would pursue, and she received with cold respect and unbroken silence, every advance made to her. At length, the King, in

despair of moving her heart, arose, and with the same secrecy that he came, so he returned, but determined in his own breast to leave nothing undone by which he might secure this gem for himself, and place it in his harem, as the ornament, delight and consolation of his hours of retirement. The first step towards obtaining this end, was sending presents of the most costly description to Abdallah's house. Every thing that could flatter the vanity of woman and excite her cupidity, was presented to her, accompanied by such demonstrations of respect and devotion, as could only reside in the breast of a devoted lover. The next step, was to heap honours and distinctions upon the husband.

On the morning that succeeded the interview in the harem, the Kaka in person brought a magnificent dress of honour, consisting of a brocade vest, shawls of cashmere, a turban adorned with a jewel, a sword, a diamond-headed dagger—all of which were presented to Abdallah on the part of the Shah, and having



clothed himself therewith, he was straightway conducted to the royal presence.

What words can describe the excess of this foolish man's vanity, and the workings of his secret joy! His old father, too, who can with patience speak of his follies! They both seemed to have lost their wits. Mounted on a finely caparisoned horse, Abdallah proceeded to pay his court to the Shah, and rode in state along the streets and bazaars, through which he hitherto had walked, his back pompously curved, his eye averted, and his features thrown into a cast of conscious superiority, flattering himself that for the future he was called upon to act a new part, and resolving, within his breast, that he would make his former companions feel that he no more belonged to them. But, although his pride was great, yet it was nothing compared to the astonishment which his sudden elevation produced, both in the bazaar and at court.

"How is this?" said one; "what can that double-dotted ass, Abdallah, have done, to become thus distinguished?"

"Don't you know," answered a second, "he has brought the most beautiful of wives from Basora, and the Shah went in disguise to inspect her."

"So! is it?" said the other; "then he is a cleverer merchant than I took him for—we shall all be looking out for handsome wives."

"It is that vile procurer, the Kaka, who is the agent," said a third. "He is a misfortune. May his house be ruined!"

"And what does Mirza *Bakhtir* say? is he to have a kalaat and make the obeisance?" inquired another. "He is the father and grandfather of asses, and that is enough for him! He eats more dirt in a day, than all Ispahan does in a year. See, see! where good fortune is gone to build her nest. We, poor devils—we work with the sweat of our brows, and esteem ourselves lucky if our gains, at the end of the year, keep us alive and are not taken from us, whilst here is a burnt father, who, with scarcely enough wit to keep the bastinado from his feet, receives rich presents, wears a golden coat, and stands among nobles under the

shade of the throne. Wonderful thing is destiny!"

Such was the effect produced in the bazaar. At court, and at the King's gate, it excited still more wonderment.

"For the love of Allah, who was that piece of vulgarity with a kalaat, who was presented this morning to the King?" said the chief master of the ceremonies, as he sat in the assembly at the King's gate. "This is a piece of handy work that smells of brother Cottonwool."

"And if it does smell of Cottonwool," said the Kaka in person, in quick retort, "let us hope that it may not be offensive. It is better that the asylum of the world should be taken up in bestowing dresses of honour than in burning the souls of his subjects."

"By your head and by my death," exclaimed one of the royal officers, a fop and a libertine, addressing the chief master of the ceremonies; "you had to present a fellow that was never before mounted upon a high-heeled shoe, and who never wore red cloth stockings before—you might as well make a

buffalo perform a bow. He ought to sell his wife cheap, if he acquires his honours thus easily."

"Truly spoke the Kaka," said a scribe belonging to the grandvizier, "when he asserted that every thing ought to be done to preserve the country from the effects of the Shah's melancholy. What are the vulgar airs of a fool, when compared with the security of our necks?"

"Did you ever see so awkward an exhibition as the fellow made?" said another. "When the King of Kings said, 'you are welcome,' instead of holding his tongue, the ass said, 'may your shadow never be less'—a camel-driver would have done better."

"Let him alone, let him alone," exclaimed the Kaka, chuckling with exultation; "he did very well for a poor devil who is about losing his wife. Our heads will be all the better for it too. Let us hope that it will give encouragement to those burnt fathers, the merchants, to speculate in such like commodities for the future, and make a good market of the royal

affections. 'Tis better the King should love than hate."

Thus did the conversation flow after the usual levee or selam of the day had taken place, whilst Abdallah retraced his steps to his own house, decked with the gaudy trappings of his kalaat, and more pleased with his person than was the jay strutting about with the plumage of the peacock. When he reached his own gate, he walked into the house with a stately step, and presented himself to his anxious wife, who did not cease to ponder over the predicament into which his weakness, vanity, and imbecility had thrown her. So soon as he appeared, she invited him into her private room, and seating herself near him, said, in a most serious tone :

"Abdallah, I have many things to say to you."

"What more than *mobarek*, or happiness attend you, can you have to say to me on such a day as this?" said he. "I swear by your bright eyes, that the Shah received me with the affection of a brother. We are one—what would you have more?"

“I have this to say,” said Fatmeh, “that, in consequence of your conduct, ruin will overtake your house, and that after being the laughing-stock of the world, you will become its outcast. The friendship of a King is as dangerous as is the shelter of a tree in a storm. I tell you what, Abdallah, the Shah will do his utmost to seduce your wife from you. Of that be certain, and, moreover, she wishes to be informed whether she is to confide in the protection of her husband or not. She requires a solemn answer.”

“What are you saying? what words are these?” exclaimed Abdallah, making light of her serious appeal. “Is not the Shah my friend? Wherefore did he send me this kalaat? And is the Kaka nothing? He who would cut his beard off to give me pleasure. What can the Shah want with you, when he possesses a whole harem full of women—women without their equals? Go, go—do not fear. Keep your apprehensions to yourself, and you will see Abdallah a vizier of state before another moon be expired. Go—go.”

Upon which, his brain inflated with



vanity, and his heart dried up with selfishness, he left his wife to air his grandeur among his associates, and there to receive the expression of their derision and contempt.

Fatmeh was mortified and disgusted at the result of her interview with her husband. Her sagacity, as well as the quickness of woman's instinct, had more than apprized her what were the views of Shah Abbas upon herself, and from the specimen which she had just experienced of Abdallah's insensibility, she came to the conclusion that she could trust to no one for the protection of her honour, but herself. Long she pondered—long she reflected upon the best line of conduct to pursue. She was determined not to become a debased woman; death, she agreed, in her inmost mind, were preferable, and happen what might, she was resolved never to lose her own self-esteem. She still had hope, should the Shah seek a second interview with her, (which she made no doubt he would,) that her entreaties, and an appeal to his better feelings, might screen her from impending harm, but should he persist, and seeing the imbecility of

her husband's conduct, she was afraid that he would, she was resolved to use all her energies to discover how she could best effect her escape.

The Shah, in truth, did not fail on that very same night, (so greatly enamoured was he), accompanied by the Kaka and his trusty executioner, to visit Abdallah a second time, in a similar manner and under a similar disguise as on the first occasion. Fatmeh received him with renewed demonstrations of respect, although with a serious and composed manner, yet she did not shrink from the interview, nor did she make the least attempt to raise unnecessary difficulties, by adhering to her veil, or insisting upon otherwise keeping up the dignity of the harem. She acknowledged that the Shah had a right to inspect the faces of his subjects, either men or women, and, therefore, her docility in this respect, which the Shah, in his inmost heart, took for a device to make herself agreeable to him, was a means of accelerating the agitation of the subject she was anxious to discuss.



As soon as they were seated, to the King's surprise, Fatmeh desired they might be left alone, and when the Kaka and her husband quitted the room, she arose, and making a profound obeisance, said :

“ I am your sacrifice—I am the humblest of the slaves of the asylum of the world, and as such I beg leave to throw myself upon his mercy, and make known this my petition. In all times, from the days of our ancient monarchies, when we worshipped fire, to this present time, when we worship one true and only Allah, the harem has been held sacred. No King, however despotic, has ever invaded its sanctity with impunity. You, O King, are one of the greatest of our monarchs—you have always been looked upon as the guardian and protector of our institutions, and of none more so than the sanctity of the harem. Why, then, let your slave in all humility ask, why has your Majesty deviated from your admirable rule of conduct in the single instance of your slave's house? What has she or her husband ever done to bring this misfortune on their heads ?”

"Husband!" exclaimed the Shah. "We have been informed that you were not Abdallah's wife, but his slave. How is this?"

"Then your Majesty has been basely deceived," said Fatmeh, with spirit. "Oh, change, then, your line of conduct. Let this act of deceit redound to her advantage, in order that the consequences of it may fall upon the head of the deceiver."

The King was at first shaken in his object by this unexpected appeal, and he felt angry at the deceit practised upon him; but, in fact, he was a great deal too much enslaved to recede, and the feeling of anger was very transient. He determined not to forego advantages which he felt conscious of possessing, and, therefore, although he at first confined himself to general professions of his love for justice, and his wish to respect the institutions of his country, yet very soon his passion obtained the supremacy, and he then poured forth his sentiments in a rhapsody common to all lovers, since love was a passion.

Fatmeh, finding that her appeal had been

made in vain, and that all her worst fears were verified, then entreated for a week's delay ere she gave an answer to the Shah's proposals. He had urged his suit in a manner difficult to be resisted ; for he offered to make her the head of his harem, to sacrifice every other woman to her, and hinted that a Shah's wishes were not to be rejected with impunity. Fatmeh felt that to resist such power was impossible, and that her best resource would consist in acquiring time, during which she might mature her scheme for escape.

To her request, the Shah acceded, and glad was he to do so, although he willingly would, at that very moment, have eloped with her. But now that he had discovered he was about to seduce a wife, and not receive a slave, from one of his subjects, he thought it fitting to screen himself from the hatred which such an act of tyranny would not fail to awaken, by conducting the whole affair in as quiet a manner as possible. Accordingly, after having presented Fatmeh with a ring of immense value, and again receiving her promise that in seven

days time she would communicate her ultimate resolve, he left the house.

The courageous woman, strong in her virtue, without hesitating a moment, determined upon what course to pursue. She immediately sat down and wrote a letter. To her brother, a young man who lived in Shiraz, and was a sword cutler by trade. They were mutually attached, and she could depend upon him as she could upon herself. Without mentioning the peculiarities of the case, she informed him that she was in imminent danger of being driven to despair, and requested him, upon receipt of this letter, to depart as secretly as he could from Shiraz, and to come to her rescue. She planned the whole of his operations—how, when, and where he was to alight—and enjoined the greatest prudence, as well as the greatest secrecy, in every step he took. She then dispatched it by a trustworthy messenger, who was to return immediately with the answer.

Having done this, she duly warned her husband of the risk he was about to undergo of

seeing himself and his house ruined, and told him truly and honestly all that had taken place between herself and the Shah. His infatuation was complete. He refused to listen to any thing she had to say, but inflated with his honors, and swelling with importance, he gave himself all the airs of one who had already attained the highest eminence in the state. Neither would his foolish old father listen to her, although she roundly informed him of the steps which the Shah was taking to seduce her from her home.

At length, the seventh day came, and with it the answer from her brother, who informed her that he would be at the prescribed spot at Ispahan, two days after the arrival of the messenger. This piece of news gave her animation and invigorated her courage, and when the eunuch, on the part of the Shah, came to receive her orders as to the time when she would wish to take possession of her apartments in the palace, she was ready to give him her answer and directions. She requested him to convey a message to the Shah to this effect—that

she was prepared to proceed immediately to the palace, provided that for three successive days she remained totally and entirely undisturbed and unvisited; during which, she should enjoy the privilege of life or death, with full power to command the services of the officers of justice, and that without giving an account of her actions to any person except the Shah.

The eunuch to whom she confided this message, was the same who had accompanied the Kaka on the first night of his visit; and as he was ambitious of securing the good graces of one, whom he foresaw would be paramount in the seraglio, he did his utmost, when conveying it to his royal master, to see that the wishes it contained were fulfilled. It was unconditionally granted, for the Shah could set no bounds to his love and admiration; in addition to looking upon her as the most perfect combination of beauty and charm, he esteemed her as a prodigy of wisdom and sagacity.

The eunuch, therefore, was enjoined immediately to return, and to take with him a hand-

some retinue of servants, in order that she might be conducted to the palace with all possible honour, and to refuse nothing which she might desire.

Accordingly, a horse magnificently caparisoned from the royal stables, stood at the gate of Abdallah's house, whilst the eunuch himself on foot, escorted by a crowd of servants, appeared to announce that all was ready.

Abdallah having been informed to what extent his gate was honoured, was more than ever entranced with pleasure. He proceeded to congratulate Fatmeh on her prospects, and, in his blindness, seemed to think that this, her visit to the royal harem, was immediately to be productive of increased honours to himself. She received him with coldness and severity. She felt that it was now too late to open his eyes to the truth, and that having proceeded thus far in a scheme which had become her only chance of escaping from infamy, she could not reveal it to him without danger to the existence of all parties concerned. She merely observed, when quitting his house,

“Abdallah Aga, whatever happens, take the whole blame to yourself. May Allah receive you into his holy keeping!”

Upon which, assisted by the eunuch, she mounted the horse prepared for her, and pursued her way to the royal palace.

No sooner had she got there, than she took possession of her apartments, but shunned to make herself known to the crowd of brilliant female attendants that had been provided for her. To the astonishment of all, she then issued directions to the same eunuch who had attended her, to order a band of executioners, provided with a felek and bastinadoing sticks, to be in readiness at her call. She waited until the close of day, and then sent an officer of the household to Kaka Pembeh, with an order that he should appear before her.

He readily came, expecting to be the first to receive some rich and liberal testimony of her gratitude for the brilliant position in which she had been placed. His face bespoke satisfaction—his words intimacy and freedom. But what was his surprise, when entering the room in which she sat, acting up to the dignity of a



Queen, not to be invited to sit, but on the contrary, ordered to stand at a distance.

Fatmeh then drawing herself up and throwing the utmost severity into her manner and voice said :

“ If you think, base man, that I have required your presence in order to thank you for the elevated position in which you now see me, you are fatally mistaken—on the contrary, you have grossly and irrevocably insulted me. To you and you only, am I indebted for the degradation of becoming a King’s mistress instead of being an honest man’s wife. Learn, sir, that much as I prized being the one, so much do I abhor becoming the other. You have insidiously taken advantage of my husband’s weakness to gain your own ends—because I am a weak and frail woman, is that a reason why I should be made the victim of temptation? Because he is vain, are you, therefore, to be unjust? Were it not for you, the Shah had never known that I existed, and unmolested I should have continued in the enjoyment of my peace of mind. As it is, I am an outcast—at your instigation, first he has been led to think that I am a slave,

and, therefore, a lawful prize, and then when his determination was made up to possess me, you urged him on to invade the sanctity of the harem, and thus caused him to commit a sin against both God and man. Can you expect thanks from me after having created all this mischief and committed all this wickedness? From man, perhaps, you will gain nothing but applause—you have planned and have succeeded. The Shah is on your side—the world will say you have shewn ability, and no doubt you exult. But, sir, in so doing, you have ruined an honest man's happiness, and have degraded a virtuous woman. However, sir, the punishment which is your due, though not inflicted by the power of man, shall, *Inshallah*, be inflicted by the agency of weak woman. I am absolute here for three days, and thus do I make use of my privilege."

She then called to the attending eunuch, and ordered that the Kaka should be dragged forth and beaten on the soles of his feet, till she should cry enough.

"Go sir," she exclaimed, as he was about being seized, "go, receive a foretaste of future

punishment in that which you will receive now, and when you determine to ruin an honest woman again, think of your present victim, the unfortunate Fatmeh."

The utter astonishment of the Kaka may be better imagined than described. His face, at first, appeared undetermined whether to laugh at the whole scene as some premeditated hoax, or to take it in sober earnest. His features became longer and longer, as the offended woman encreased in energy, his eyes opened wide, his large ears vibrated, his under jaw dropped, and he stood in an attitude of one waiting to see a result.

When he was informed that the being before him was really absolute, and when he heard the sentence of punishment passed upon him, giving himself up for lost, he dropped on his knees, and having found a retreat in his lungs, to which he applied with an energy they never before possessed, he poured forth his fears in most piteous accents.

He opened wide his mouth, and upon receiving the first blow threw out a yell, so piercing, that it was said to have been

recognized by the Shah in a distant part of the palace whilst his Majesty was seated at supper.

He cried out *Amán! Amán!* in such a variety of tones, so wretched and at the same time so comical, that the attendant women, the eunuchs, and principally the operating executioners could not contain their laughter.

"To *Amán,*" he added, "I have eaten dirt," in accents equally mournful, and then he finished by the words, "forgive, forgive," calling to his aid, the King's salt, soul and beard, with every endearing appeal that he could bring to mind, until no longer being able to articulate, he was carried away to his own home, soundly beaten.

Fatmeh having performed this feat, then ordered every one to go from before her, proclaiming that she should remain entirely alone for the remaining two days, after which she would announce herself ready to see the King. She ordered the keys of every door to be brought, and took such singular precautions, making such a variety of strange arrangements, that the inmates of the palace were led to think that she might not be in her right mind.

When Fatmeh was left to herself, her first impulse was to throw herself upon her knees before Allah and say her prayers with fervour, imploring a blessing upon her undertaking. She then took off all the finery, the shawls, the cloth of gold and the jewellery with which she was decked, and having folded them into a heap, placed them conspicuously in the middle of the room, and deposited there-upon the magnificent ring which she had received from the Shah. She then clothed herself in her own garments, and covering herself from head to foot in a veil usually worn by women when they walk the streets, she waited for the hour when she might in safety venture to leave the palace.

She said to herself, "Ali," (that was the name of her brother) "will now be there, and should God listen to my prayer, in another hour I shall be under his protection."

She had previously so carefully enquired her way to the different exits of the palace, as well as to the outlets of the city, that she was at no loss how to proceed. When it was fully dark, and before the gates were closed, she boldly

advanced, and being taken for a slave by her attire, she walked on unmolested, until quite clear of the palace, when having found her way into the long and magnificent avenue of the Chahar Bagh, she knew that she could not miss the great cemetery, whither she had given rendez-vous to her brother. She walked on fearlessly, impelled by the consciousness of doing right, but when advancing upon the open ground at the termination of the avenue, she could not repress certain misgivings at finding herself so lonely and in so desolate a place, until perceiving the cemetery and its various tombs at hand, she again took courage, emboldened by the hope of soon meeting her brother. As she proceeded to thread the intricacies of the burying ground, she felt her fears return hearing the distant yells of the prowling jackall accompanied by the doleful sounds of the melancholy night bird. She imagined she saw figures gliding among the tombs, and all the terrors of death came before her mind. She had given the rendez-vous to her brother behind a given tomb, but there were so many, and all so like each other, that it was

with difficulty she could discover the very one she sought.

Her knees began to knock under her, her teeth chattered, and she was about taking refuge beneath a broken arch, when she heard the pleasing sound of a horse's neigh.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "there he is!" she then called him by name with all her might, when to her unspeakable joy, she immediately heard his voice responding her own, the sound of which issued from behind an adjacent tomb. She sprung thither and soon found herself in the embrace of her dearly beloved Ali.

They said little at first; "where are the horses?" said Fatmeh.

"Here they are," said Ali, "and their spirits are well up, I have taken care of that."

"Come let us go," said his sister, "I will tell you all bye and bye."

They mounted immediately, and were soon on the road to Shiraz. They rode a good pace upon first starting, in breathless silence, but as they proceeded, they relaxed.

Ali was a young man about twenty-five years old, singularly active, clever and enterprising.

No difficulty ever arrested or perplexed him—he was ready at every call, observant and sagacious, and moreover of a kind and affectionate nature.

He knew his sister to be equally sagacious, and that she would not have sent for him but for very good reasons. His forethought had made him take every precaution to secure a safe and expeditious flight, and he had prepared a retreat for her at Shiraz, which would require something more than man's ingenuity to discover, should she be pursued. They continued their journey along the high road during the night, and in the morning struck into unfrequented paths, leaving the town of Yezdikhast on the left, and only touching at remote villages when they required refreshment.

It was during the journey that Fatmeh related to her brother the reasons which had determined her to leave her husband and send for him, she dwelt long upon the misery she had endured, and succeeded in exciting all his anger at the conduct of the Kaka, upon whom he was determined to be revenged, for the infamous



part he had acted. As for Abdallah, he knew that in the natural course of events, owing to his sister's spirited enterprise, he must come to the disgrace which was his due : he could not fail in some shape or other incurring the Shah's displeasure, but he vowed that if ever he met him, he should feel the weight of his anger. His principal aim was to place Fatmeh in safety, and to screen her from the search, which no doubt would immediately be instituted for her.

The second night after their departure from Ispahan, their horses being worn by excess of fatigue, they took refuge in a ruined caravanserai, where they intended to rest for some hours, feeling themselves secure, at present, from pursuit.

Ali helped his sister to dismount, and then sought for refreshment in certain saddle bags, which he had brought by way of precaution. He had been provident enough to conduct a third horse with him, in case either of the others should be knocked up, and glad was he to have done so, for his own exhibited strong symptoms of inability to proceed. He

turned them into the caravanserai, and having found some chopped straw which had been left there by former travellers, together with the corn which he had brought with him, he managed to give the poor animals a tolerable feed.

He and his sister seated on a horse cloth, were calmly discussing their sober repast, as well as the circumstances which had led to their present adventure, when suddenly they were startled by hearing what they thought to be a groan. They both looked serious, became silent, and lent a quick ear to the quarter whence the sound proceeded—again the groan was heard, it was that of a human being, and so deep that they concluded it to proceed from a man.

Ali immediately arose from his seat, and with his hand on his dagger, making a sign to his sister, at the same time, to remain still, he proceeded in the direction whence he heard the sound.

He bent his steps to the back part of the building where the arches were sound and

unbroken, but finding little light, he could not well distinguish what might be there secreted. He waited for a short time in order that his eyes might become accustomed to the darkness, and then looking well about him, perceived extended in a corner, what he conceived to be a dying man, who appeared motionless and occasionally emitted a deep groan. He then stepped forward, and at the same time cried out, "who is there?"

The figure answering the question by a louder groan, Ali soon approached, and there, indeed, he found a man evidently much wounded, pale and weak from loss of blood, and in every way an object rather of compassion than of apprehension.

The first sound he uttered, was a cry for water, which Ali quickly brought, and which no sooner had he drunk than he seemed much refreshed, so much so, that he became strong enough to articulate.

"Who are you and what has happened?" said Ali, anxious in his enquiry.

All the answer the sufferer could elicit was,

"I am dead—I am dead—they have killed me, the bankrupt dogs have killed me—may they grill in fires."

Again Ali enquired, "who are you?" but he received the same sort of answer, manifestly unwilling to make himself known.

Ali, then, assisted by his sister, who veiling herself, had followed his footsteps, brought him food, and demonstrated so much kindness, that the wariness of the stranger began to dissipate, and he appeared inclined to give some account of himself.

"What is the use of saying who and what I am," said he, "since here I must die, for I have no means of pursuing my journey and reaching my home. I am so wounded and bruised, that to walk is impossible, and were I to be found alone on these desert plains, I should only be subject to another assault."

"But, perhaps, we may be of use," said Fatmeh in her sweetest tone, "cannot we assist you?"

"The blessing of Allah be upon you," said the stranger, "how am I ever to shew my gratitude?"

My home is distant, and who is there to go thither for me ?”

“ We too,” said Ali, “ are on business of life and death, or in truth we would willingly go, but (a thought striking him at the same time) here is a horse at your service, jaded though he be—give him but time to recover his strength, and I’ll promise you that he will carry you home, and to his services you are heartily welcome.”

“ Well done ! oh my brother,” exclaimed Fatmeh, “ truly you have done well, and thanks be to the prophet that we are able to help the stranger—yes, take the horse—have but a few hour’s patience, and he will then be fit to carry you : as for us, we must proceed on our journey—we cannot delay—and so *Inshallah* we shall both be saved.”

The wounded man looked up into the faces of the brother and sister, with the same degree of awe that he might have gazed upon angels.

“ There is but one Allah !” said he in astonishment, “ what do I hear ? do you come

from paradise that you should talk thus to a poor wretch like me—have my ears heard aright, or are you laughing at my beard?"

"Yes, yes," said they both in accents of encouragement, "we mean what we say, and so it shall be—take heart—look up—Allah sends succour to the unfortunate. It was a good hour when we came hither, and whenever it pleases Him to conduct you home, then say *barikallah!* oh well done Ali—the sword-cutler of Shiraz."

"Since thus you speak," said the stranger, "why should this less than the least lie, and not own the truth? Give ear—when you hear who I am; start not, but lay my words to heart and may destiny turn them to a fortunate account. Give ear—I am one whom men fear, and should I ever be caught, they will come from afar to see me. I am the man they call Iskender Memacenni—have you heard and do you understand?"

"I both hear and understand," said Ali, "you need say no more—we are told to help the afflicted, and to be hospitable to the stranger—what can we do more?"

Iskender was a famous chief of the Memacenni, an ancient tribe of mountaineers, celebrated as the most expert and powerful thieves and marauders ever known in Persia. They inhabited the country about the Caleh Sefid or the White Castle, and kept so close to their fastnesses in the mountains, where they are independent of all government, that the Shah and his governors looking upon their destruction as hopeless, thought it best to compromise matters, and for a certain annual tribute, allowed them to remain unmolested, although they were the terror of caravans and travellers.

Gaining strength with the food he had eaten, and animated with the exciting hope of being able to reach his home, Iskender gradually raised himself from the ground, and exhibited to the eyes of Ali and Fatmeh, the form of a strong and powerful man, his features stern and ferocious, though when relaxed, expressing much feeling, and bearing in his whole deportment, the manners of one accustomed to command. He said,

“ My story is this—I left the castle yester-

day with a band of twenty men, having heard that a large caravan would pass in the morning at day-break. But evidently we were purposely deceived—for when we lay in ambush in the mountain pass, instead of a caravan, we perceived a strong body of the governor of Shiraz's cavalry approaching, and then we knew that we were betrayed. I gave the signal to disperse, but not before the attack. We made the best defence we could surrounded on every side—we fought, and I should have been taken, had not my horse been swifter than those of my assailants—I escaped from the principal body, but two *gholams*, who rode horses almost equal to mine, chose to give chase and followed me far into this plain, when my steed fell and I was obliged to fight on foot: they beat me almost to death and left me in the state you see, taking my fine horse as their prize. They left me for dead on the field, but reviving after some time, I was enabled with the aid and mercy of Allah to crawl hither, and here I probably should have died, had you not come to my relief."



Ali little expected that the man whom they had thus relieved, should prove so objectionable and formidable a character. Having once made a present of his horse, he could not withdraw it, but still urged the robber chief to take advantage of it, although at the same time, he became extremely impatient to shorten his acquaintance with such a personage. Iskender, seeing them on the point of departure, and feeling that through their generosity, he was enabled to leave a spot which otherwise would probably have been his tomb, gave utterance to his gratitude in the following words.

“ May Allah take you into his holy keeping—may you never know misfortune—may plenty always abound in your house ! Allah grant that some opportunity may occur which will allow Iskender to exhibit his gratitude, to shew that he is a man—that he can requite a benefit—that he is more than sensible to such goodness as you have shewn him ! You have saved his life, when you might have allowed him to die. You continue your benefits to him although you know that he is unworthy of them—you treat him as a friend, when all else treat him

as an enemy! Where can he find words to speak of so much goodness? This learn—this keep at the bottom of your heart, that should misfortune ever overtake you, should you ever want an asylum from oppression, fly to him, seek him among his brave tribe and his gallant followers, they will receive you with open arms, they will carry you on the tops of their heads, the dust of your feet will be ointment for their eyes, they will protect you in their mountains, in their deep caverns they will preserve you from harm, they will live for you, and they will also die for you.”

This he uttered with such warmth, and such appearance of sincerity, that both Ali and his sister were sensibly affected, and promised faithfully never to lose the recollection of his promises, for they both in their inmost hearts could not help feeling, that the day might come, when in reality, they would stand in need of such a friend. They took an affectionate leave of him, and forgetting the robber, in consideration of the high qualities, which evidently characterised the

man, they sincerely wished him happiness, and again bent their steps toward Shiraz.

Ali and Fatmeh managed to enter the gates of the city, together with the crowd of peasants who usually collect there at the earliest dawn, previous to the entrance being free. He sought his home as speedily as possible, and stealthily deposited his charge therein, before the neighbours were astir. Indeed, Fatmeh reached her place of refuge unknown, and unnoticed, and here we must leave her for the present, to see what was doing at the royal palace at Ispahan subsequent to her departure.

When Shah Abbas, at supper, was informed, that the Kaka was receiving the bastinado, by the command of the Lady Fatmeh, the asylum of the universe laughed till tears came from his eyes. He had never before enjoyed so comfortable a joke. Ah! said his Majesty to himself, this will teach the rascal not to call a lawful wife, a slave again—she has evidently heard the scandal, and is paying him for his insolence. As soon as the beaten man was able to hobble, he hastened to lay his com-

plaint before the Shah. The figure he made, was in every way woeful, and at the same time comical to behold. His naturally crooked legs were become doubly so, in consequence of his limping gait, whilst his face betrayed pain of body and mortification of mind.

"As I am your sacrifice," he said, bowing himself down before the monarch, "let the King of Kings cast his eyes upon his slave, and observe the situation to which he is reduced. May his liver become dry, may his eyes look within instead of without, may he never again rub his unworthy forehead against the royal threshold, if (saving your imperial presence), that blessed houri, that loveliest of the lovely, that rose without compare, has not, in all mercy and tender heartedness, beat the feet of your unworthy slave into a jelly. See, he cannot walk without limping like a stricken hind. He has in vain desired to make a report of her charms and perfections, but has hitherto been prevented by the new mode she has adopted of expressing her satisfaction at your slave's conduct. And, wherefore, O centre of the world, is all this? because he has been

the cause of separating her from that king of mules her husband, to unite her to that King of Kings, our blessed Sovereign, to whom be long life and a happy reign. Is this a reason, why your slave should be beaten and be prevented from paying his court to his royal master?"

"You have said enough," said the King—"the Lady Fatmeh has only done what I intended to do. Is it not just and lawful that she should be offended at the insult you offered, calling her a slave, when she is a free woman; wherefore will you always lie, O little man! Why will that throat of yours be like an open tomb, full of rottenness and abomination—the Lady did right—say no more—thank Allah it is no worse, and bless your good destiny that the Shah still calls you Kaka."

The unfortunate jester seeing how matters stood, was wise enough to hold his peace, and without more words allowed his wounded feet to get well, whilst he smothered his still more wounded feelings. The Shah, in the meanwhile, adhered most faithfully to his fair in-

mate's desire of perfect quiet and solitude, for three days before he visited her, although his patience, during the process, was undergoing a severe trial. In order to beguile the time, he undertook a hunting excursion, and strange to say, pursued the direction in which the fugitives were directing their course, but luckily they had obtained the start of a whole night, and were nearly installed in Shiraz before the expiration of the third day.

On the morning of the fourth, the Shah sent for the head of the harem, the eunuch in chief, and ordered him to proceed with all due respect to the apartments of the Lady Fatmeh to say that he would pay her a visit immediately after the great public audience, and that every thing should be prepared to receive him in the most magnificent manner. Accordingly that dignitary proceeded to the gate of the apartment, which finding locked, he invaded with all the authority of one bearing a commission from the King. He knocked and knocked again, but no response being made, he proceeded to batter down the door, which being done, he entered, but full

of wonder, he found no inhabitant, nor any appearance of one. He walked from room to room, nothing was seen, until he came to the great hall, and there, in the midst, he found the heap which Fatmeh had made of her finery, surmounted by the valuable ring.

Surprise and astonishment seized the eunuch and his attendants. How is this, said one! Ajaib! Wonderful, said another. The Kaka will pay for this, said a third. She is gone as sure as destiny, was repeated from mouth to mouth, as soon as the wonderful intelligence was known throughout the palace—then all was hurry—every hole and corner were ransacked—messengers ran to and fro, porters were interrogated, the city guards questioned, every thing was done which might throw a light upon this strange elopement; but nothing was elicited.

As the time drew near when the Shah was to make his visit, his impatience now being excited to the utmost, it became necessary to devise some mode of informing him of the real state of the case. Who would undeceive him? that was the question, for the first burst of a despots anger is always a most dangerous

crisis. The eunuch in chief was the official channel through which the information ought to be carried, but he already was almost dead with fear. The grand vizier was resorted to in the emergency, but he avowed that he never interfered, and, indeed, it was indelicate and improper that he should meddle in affairs of the harem, therefore, he declined—at length all were unanimous that the Kaka should be the man—he was pitched upon to be the informer—but he had suffered enough for once, and he shrunk from the task as he would from certain decapitation. But upon second consideration, seeing that the truth could not be concealed, that it must be told and that within a very short space of time, and that ultimately he must encounter a considerable share of the Shah's displeasure, he deemed it the wisest plan on all accounts, for himself, as well as for every one else, to proceed boldly and inform the King.

Shah Abbas on that morning had dressed himself with more than usual splendour. He placed a resplendent cap on his head, ornamented with the royal jika, he wore rich



armlets, dazzling by the magnificence of the diamonds, his vest was of cloth of gold, his dagger glittered with jewels, and his whole appearance, having freshly dyed his beard, bespoke a desire to please and astonish.

On rising from his throne, at the breaking up of the usual noon-day Selam, he was proceeding straight to his favourite's apartments, when he was met in the long court leading thereto by the Kaka, who having put on a face for the occasion, was seen advancing with unusual trepidation, in a manner which luckily-excited the royal smile, and when close to the royal person, was observed to fall prone on his face, and there lay to the astonishment of the King, and those around him.

"What has happened, O little man!" exclaimed the Shah. "Are we mad this morning, or have our courtiers become like asses in the field. Speak, what is it?"

"Your slave is dumb with terror," said the Kaka, "prodigies have come to pass—the world is gone back—we are become dogs and swine!"

"Speak—wherefore do you stay my progress,"

said the Shah, and again was proceeding on his expedition of expected enjoyment.

"Wonderful, wonderful!" exclaimed the Kala, "the nightingale is seeking the rose, but the rose will not receive the nightingale. She is gone. The charmer is fled. Satan has gotten possession of her, and we are left in doubt and suspense. The world is walking round and round its own finger."

"What words are these!" said the Shah, his countenance undergoing a rapid change of expression. "Speak plain. Who is fled?"

Then all the surrounding attendants who were aware of the flight of Fatmeh, fell upon their faces and exclaimed "the Lady Fatmeh is gone!"

The King stood like one struck by some fatal disorder. He trembled, his face became scarlet, then pale—his eyes shot fire, his forehead worked to and fro, his teeth were set, and after exhibiting every effect of mortified pride and baffled expectation, he broke out into uncontrollable anger. He first apostrophized the wretched jester. "Dog, and dirt of the earth—filth—vile scum! 'tis to you that

I owe this. In degrading the woman—you have debased your master. Here take him, throw him upon the first dunghill—go, light the oven with his vile carcase—let every dog defile his grave—let every tent-pitcher spit in his face—and where is the herd of unclean eunuchs? conduct them all hither. A woman fled from my harem and they ignorant of it! How is this? Kill them all—make more—am I a King, or am I not? We will see! We will see!” He said this, as he turned on his heel, and returned to his own apartment, his body vibrating with rage, and his hand clutching his dagger, as if he would have slain every living soul around.

In the meanwhile, the Kaka was hustled away by those who were too happy, to divert the violence of the storm from their heads to his. He was beaten, pommelled, kicked, spit upon and reviled. But as there was no really definite order to put him to death, excepting the one of heating an oven with his carcase, and as there was no oven at hand, he was left to bear his misery until one should be found, or until the royal displeasure, should be

more fully developed. Then there arose a general chase after the eunuchs, pursuant to the royal commands. They were hunted down wherever they could be found, seized and placed in durance vile, until the King's wishes should be better known. Never before had such a commotion been seen in the imperial household. Men held their heads between their two hands, fearful lest, at the next moment, they should be deprived of them. Every sole of the foot and every toe in the palace tingled with apprehension, lest they should soon be administered unto with sticks. Not a man felt comfortable. Of those who were in a state of enjoyment, the women stood alone. A hated rival had been lost to them, and they indulged the hope that now their dominion was secure, unassailed by what they esteemed a base and unlawful intrusion.

When the first explosion of the Shah's rage had in some degree abated, he ordered the Kaka to be brought before him. An officer was also sent to conduct Abdallah and his father Mirza Bauker to his presence. These two worthies when they received intimation of

Fatmeh's flight became alarmed, lest the Shah's displeasure should fall heavily upon them, and when visited by the summons to appear, their fears knew no bounds. They followed the officer in trepidation, though not without some secret hope cherished by Abdallah, that he himself was too much of a favourite at court to apprehend molestation.

When they appeared before the King, that is, the Kaka, Abdallah and Mirza Bauker, without allowing them to say a word in explanation or in self-defence, his Majesty thus addressed them: "Dogs! burnt fathers! be this known unto you, that the Shah expects the Lady Fatmeh at your hands to be restored to him. Go, bring her, and should you return without her, come each with a rope around your necks, for there will then be no hope left for you. Depart — you have all the help the King's power can give you, employ it for the good of his service, and for the salvation of your own lives. Go, the Shah has said it."

The three unhappy men, secretly surprized at this result, for in truth, they had given themselves up for lost, left the King's presence

to consult what was to be done. Finding that Fatmeh was acquainted with no one at Ispahan, therefore not likely to be secreted in the city, and hearing that she had a brother at Shiraz, the Kaka immediately opined, that to that place they ought on the outset to bend their steps, and should they not find her there, then to proceed onwards to Basora. They lost no time in collecting a sufficient escort and making their preparations for a long journey; when all was ready, provided with royal firmans and protecting officers, they departed and took the high road to Shiraz.

We must now return to Ali and Fatmeh, who having reached their abode, did not delay taking precautions to protect themselves against the consequences of their flight. They agreed that the Shah would immediately send the Kaka in pursuit, that he, learning from Abdallah that she had a brother at Shiraz, would first bend his steps thither, and that, therefore, they ought to lay their plans to meet that emergency. Fatmeh thought it most expedient, at once, to proceed in all haste to Basora, and there seek refuge with her parents; Ali, on the

contrary, was of opinion that considering the length and difficulty of the road, and the uncertainty of meeting with a vessel bound to Basora without incurring the risk of a moment's delay, there was every chance of their being overtaken. He, therefore, was strongly of opinion that they ought to remain stationary to meet the Kaka's arrival by stratagem, and defeat by their wits that which they could not resist by force. He was endowed with considerable talents of mimicry and invention, he could personate whoever he chose, and act to the life any character which had come within his observation. The plan he proposed to Fatmeh was this, that she should retire to some village for the present, that the house should be closed, and that he should announce to his neighbours and friends, that he was going to Basora. In the meanwhile, he proposed to himself to take possession of a certain hut, usually the habitation of a dervish, but now unoccupied, which was situated close to the narrow pass, called Teng Allahacbar, through which every traveller coming from Ispahan must necessarily pass, and there he would wait the arrival of the Kaka.

It would then be left to his own ingenuity so to cajole and play upon the feelings of this personage, that he might be induced to leave Shiraz unsearched, and proceed on his road towards Basora. Fatmeh ceding to the better judgment of her brother, acquiesced in his proposal, and straightway attaching herself to a company of women, about to visit a distant *Ziaretgah*, or place of pilgrimage, she left her brother to his own inventions. He forthwith procured from different hands, in order to screen himself from detection, the various articles which compose a dervish's dress—from one he borrowed the tiara, of another he purchased a deer-skin; he bought the spoon and beads in an old lumber shop, and thus when he had gathered himself together, announcing that he was about setting off for Basora and making a shew of departure, he left the city at daybreak, and took himself to the dervish's hut at the Teng Allahacbar.

There he dressed himself in his new attire, secreted his clothes in a neighbouring water-course, and having spread out his handkerchief on the border of the road, to receive the alms



of travellers and passers by, he boldly took upon himself all the airs of the character he had adopted. He loudly blew his horn, made his appeals in the most approved manner to the sacred name of Allah, and threw into his whole appearance, that wildness, fanaticism and indifference to worldly matters, so common to the brotherhood of wandering dervishes, that no acting was ever more perfect. He posted himself at the door of his hut from whence he could command both roads, and remark those who were travelling from Ispahan towards Shiraz, as well as those who were taking the opposite direction. During the first day of his probation, he was delighted to find his disguise effective, for many with whom he was intimate, having conversed with him without betraying the least sign of recognition, he flattered himself that he was quite safe from discovery. On the second day, he began to look out for the Kaka, and turned over in his mind how he might persuade him to proceed at once to the sea coast, without visiting Shiraz; when having composed in his own mind, a

story plausible in every circumstance, as well as prepared himself for every emergency, he felt more easy, and quite ready to act his part.

He feared that should this personage appear at nightfall, his scheme would be defeated for then he would not fail taking up his quarters in the city, but if by good luck he arrived either in the morning or at noon, then he might most likely persuade him to travel onwards. In either case, he framed expedients ready for use, and after every train of thought, he composed his spirits by a hearty exclamation of *Allah kerim*, God is merciful!

He began to look about him very sharply on the evening of the second day, but no Kaka appearing, he laid himself down on his deer-skin and slept; very early the next morning, however, ere the day had dawned, he thought he heard the distant footsteps of a large cavalcade. He arose in haste and looking towards the Ispahan road, he, indeed, perceived many horsemen coming towards him. The day was clearing fast, and as they passed under the archway, situated at the summit of the pass, he was certain that in the foremost horseman,

he perceived the ill-shapen person of the Kaka. His heart throbbed when he found that his moment for trial was come. The Kaka was known to all the world and not to be mistaken. He, Ali, was unknown to the Kaka, and so far safe. He was very slightly acquainted with Abdallah, who had only seen him once when a boy at Basora, and he never had any dealings with Mirza Bauker, therefore, on the whole, he hoped to pass unrecognized.

When they approached, Ali began to wind his dervish's horn and to utter loud cries, of Hoo! Allah Acbar! May Allah prosper your journey! and such like exclamations, seating himself on the ground at the same time near to his outspread handkerchief.

"Peace be with you, Sir dervish," said the Kaka as he rode up.

"May peace attend you," said Ali looking totally unconcerned, and almost contemptuously at the company, after the manner of dervishes.

"What news is there," said the Kaka.

"*Dúniah pootch est*, the world is a

rapour, that is the news," said the pretended dervish still more contemptuously.

The Kaka, Abdallah and Mirza Bauker with the royal eunuch, who was one of the company, then consulting together in an under tone, Ali at a glance perceived who they were, and prepared himself accordingly.

"Have any women passed this way lately," said the Kaka.

"Women!" said Ali, "what do I know of women! they pass and repass, what more can I say!"

"We enquire about one woman in particular," said Abdallah, "travelling alone from Is-pahan, have you seen any such?"

"And wherefore not?" said Ali, "if I have seen such a woman, what then?"

These words produced great and general excitement among the assembled party. "For the sake of Allah," said the Kaka, "tell us all that you know concerning her. In the name of the Shah, whose servant I am, I request of you to speak and tell no lies."

Ali observing their state of anxiety, became proportionately indifferent. What care I or what can I say? She was a weak one, a little

woman. She was without strength. She said she had come from afar—what more can I say?”

“That’s her we seek,” said Abdallah, “did she say whence she came?”

“Perhaps she did, perhaps she did not,” answered Ali, “I think she said she came from Ispahan, but she might have come from Paradise for what I know. What has a dervish to do with womankind?”

“O little man!” exclaimed the Kaka in a voice, which denoted impatience and irritation. “Do you see these men? They will tear you to pieces bit by bit, if you do not speak. They are the Shah’s gholams, I am the King’s servant, and should you not inform us of all you know concerning this woman, by Allah, by all that is sacred, we will cut your tongue out.

“If you cut my tongue out, you will be making bad worse,” said Ali, with provoking obstinacy, “what can the poor dervish say, when his tongue is out?”

“We know what sort of swine dervishes are,” said the Kaka still more irate, “when they lie, they lie for gain—when they are silent, they are silent for gain also. Speak!”

“What more did the woman say,” enquired Abdallah, “and whither did she go?”

“The little woman was ill and tired,” said Ali, “and could not proceed. She was going to die.”

“Where is she then,” enquired the Kaka, “is she here?”

“Heaven forbid!” exclaimed Ali, “what should I do with a sick woman?”

“By the Imams, by the beard of the Prophet, by the King’s salt, I’ll have you soundly beaten, if you do not speak out. Here,” calling to one of his attendants, “here take this rascal, and beat him on the mouth, make his soul jump out of the first hole in his body. We will see, who will speak and who will not.”

Accordingly there was a stir among the escort, and some stout fellows dismounted, preparatory to putting the Kaka’s orders into execution, when Ali, having, as he thought, pushed matters far enough and appearing to take fright, exclaimed, “Trust in God! I will say what I know, and what more can your slave do. He cannot invent a woman to your

liking and wishes—he can only say what he saw and heard.”

“Speak on then,” exclaimed the Kaka, perfectly livid with rage. “Why do you keep us waiting? This is the Shah’s service, man! do you hear. The Shah! the Shah!”

“As I am your sacrifice,” said Ali, taking up a tone of great humility, “my narrative is as follows. Your slave was seated here, saying his evening prayers, some three, four, five days since, when he heard a woman’s voice at the door of his tent, exclaiming for the love of Allah, give me help or I die. I arose and saw a female on an ass, accompanied by a son of Islam, an old man, who might have been a peasant, or a robber, or, perhaps, one of those who live near the White Castle. I gave her water, and she was refreshed, but she said, ‘I cannot go on. I must alight and repose, or you will have to answer for my death at your door.’ There was nothing to be done, but to accede to her wishes. She came into the hut and lay down on my deer-skin. There she lay till the morning, her companion in the meanwhile, took himself off into the

desert and I saw him no more. She slept profoundly, and when the morning came, to my utter surprize, her veil having partially dropt off, I discovered that she was a houri of Paradise, and not a woman, for I verily believe that flesh and blood never before were combined into beauty and loveliness so superhuman—I gazed—I was beside myself. But when she awoke, her first impulse was to cover her face, like the strictest of the daughters of the true faith, and then she raised her voice to thank me for my hospitality. What can I say? I had become interested in the unfortunate one—I would have died for her. I said, speak to your servant and tell me what to do, for happen what may, the poor dervish will serve you to the utmost of his power. She said then in accents the most fascinating, ‘Go to one Ali, a sword cutler in Shiraz; tell him, his sister Fatmeh awaits him, and let him bring two horses with him, that we may go hence, for she will be pursued and taken, if he does not haste.’

“There was nothing to be said, I did so, I found Ali, he came with the utmost zeal to



his sister's help. He brought refreshments, he brought things, and he brought two horses. I learnt that she was flying from disgrace, that there was one Abdallah, whom she called husband, a pitiful sneaking wretch, who infatuated by a little court attention, had abandoned her to the persecutions of the Shah himself; that he was seconded by an ass of the first dimensions, one Mirza Bauker his father, who equally eat dirt by the maund, and that her principal enemy was a miscreant, one called Kaka Pembah, a vile pander to the Shah's iniquities, a jackall, who goes about seeking for innocence and destroying it;—a crooked backed, crooked minded, evil intentioned—”

“ Well, well,” exclaimed the Kaka, “ you have said enough; none of your truths by mistake, if you please,” he added in a whisper to himself.

“ *Ajaib*, wonderful !” exclaimed Abdallah.

“ *Ajaib*,” said Mirza Bauker, “ he knows us both !”

“ But whither did they go,” said the Kaka, regaining possession of the true question.

“ They set off straight for the *bender*, the port, in order to take ship and thus proceed

to Basora, where she has parents and friends. What more can I say?"

"Which road did they take," enquired one of the party.

"As I am your slave," said the pretended dervish, "I cannot answer for certain, but I think they said they would go through the Memacenni country, in order to avoid detection."

Upon this there arose much discussion among the assembled party, and, at length, it was determined, that they should not halt at Shiraz, but push on at once for Abusheher. It was also determined that Abdallah and Mirza Bauker, in order to lose no chance of success, should take the Memacenni road, and thus gaining information, trace the fugitives to the very spot of embarkation.

"But," said the wary Kaka, "are we very certain that all is the truth, which we have heard from this dervish, whoever he may be?"

"Take me with you," said Ali, "and thus you may ascertain whether he lie or not. You have me in your own hands."

"He does not speak amiss," said the Kaka,

when ordering one of the led horses to be prepared for the supposed dervish, Ali was mounted thereupon, and proceeded with the cavalcade.

They travelled straightway towards the coast, leaving Shiraz on the left hand. Ali felt delighted at the success of his imposture, and he forthwith set his invention to work, how he might best prevent the jester and his whole party from ever returning to Shiraz again. He first hoped, that good luck might throw them into the hands of the Memacenni, and thus he settled their fate in a consolatory manner to his own conscience, saying, "if they are to lose their lives, and eat a bitter destiny, O let it be soon and effectual." But seeing how well they were armed, and aware of the effect produced by the passage of a King's officer with a royal guard through the country, he felt that so sweet a hope would fail him; therefore, his last resource for practising further deceit, he foresaw would be at the place of embarcation itself, where he possessed friends who might assist him. He, therefore, devoted himself in right

earnest to acquire influence over the Kaka, a power which he possessed in a supreme degree; and most effectually did he succeed, for that worthy, in the course of a day or two, became so charmed with him and his humour, that he would only see with his eyes, hear with his ears, and reason through his understanding.

Ali owing to the sagacity of his conduct and the multiplicity of his wiles, led his companions to believe that they really had got scent of the fugitives. At one time he pretended to hear from a peasant on a distant hill, that two such people had been seen, then, that three days before they had been remarked winding their way down the steep declivity of one of the great mountain passes, and thus by plausible deceit producing conviction. On the day before reaching the city of Abusheher, Ali persuaded the Kaka to allow him to proceed in advance, in order to stay the departure of any vessel, that might be about to sail for Basora and the Euphrates. He reached the port just time enough to prevent the sailing of a bark, which happened to be owned and commanded by a near relation of

his own, to whom he did not delay relating the dangerous situation in which he and his sister were placed, and requesting him as he loved Allah and adored his prophet, to aid him in the scheme which he had carried on to save her, and which up to this moment had so well succeeded. His relation entered completely into his views; for who that had ever heard of Fatmeh, could refrain being interested in her fate, and he promised to act entirely as Ali might direct.

“Tell the Kaka,” said Ali, “as soon as he appears, that the fugitives only departed yesterday morning for Basora, and that if we hasten all we can, by setting sail instantly, we may overtake them even before they reach their destination.”

Thus much being agreed upon between them, Ali returned to the Kaka, and having met him ere he entered the town of Abusheher, informed him of the success which had attended his proceedings, that he had gained intelligence of the fugitives, and moreover that a vessel was in readiness to take him off immediately.

This intelligence gave joy and delight to the

whole party; but when Ali turned his eyes towards the Kaka's attendants, he discovered that the royal eunuch who had accompanied him, as well as several of the gholams, were not among the number.

"Where is my lord eunuch?" said Ali, "his place is empty."

"I have sent him back to Shiraz," said the Kaka, with a cunning smile, "we have agreed, that we were like the fool who left the door of the stable open, thus leaving no guard at Shiraz—so brother Ali, I have sent him back to wait my return. Have I done well or not?"

The woe stricken Ali, could scarcely command his countenance at this intelligence. He felt all the danger into which his sister would be thrown. He would have given his ears to be at Shiraz. He managed just to stammer out, "You have done well;" and then urging on the whole party towards the place of embarkation, he again proceeded in advance himself, scarcely conscious of what he was about. However, his readiness of mind and action did not forsake him. He just allowed himself time to conduct the Kaka to the vessel, and introduce

him to the captain, when under pretext of going into the bazaar to buy some necessary provisions, he immediately took himself to a friend's house, upon whom he could depend, and straightway doffing his dervish's dress, he equipped himself as one upon his travels, wearing the usual costume and armed in the ordinary mode of travellers. Then mounting a horse which he borrowed for the occasion, he left his companions to their own inventions, and straightway took the Shiraz road, in the hope of being able to reach that place before the eunuch and his party could have had time to get there.

He travelled with all haste, and being acquainted with every step of the country, and every pass in the mountains, he succeeded to his heart's content. Seeing the eunuch and his men toiling up one of the steep ascents, Ali chose one still steeper, and thus unseen, he managed to precede them, and to gain access to his own house in the city, two days before they reached their destination. His arrival gave Fatmeh, who had returned from her pilgrimage, the greatest delight, but when she heard the

cause of his sudden reappearance, she became as much the prey of apprehension as he could be.

"What shall we do? where shall we go?" she said in accents of despair. "Should this eunuch with an evil soul discover me, I am lost, I shall be straightway delivered over to the Shah, and my doom will forthwith be sealed."

"Have you forgotten Iskender, the Memacemmi?" said Ali, "now is the time to try his words and his fidelity. My soul, Fatmeh, let us bend our steps towards his haunts, there we may secrete ourselves until we hear of the Kaka's return from his fruitless expedition, when we may proceed in all safety to Basora, there to take refuge with your parents."

"Wonderful wit have you!" cried Fatmeh in exultation. "You have not spoken ill. Come let us go without a moment's delay. Should this son of Satan arrive, he will discover and seize upon me without compunction. Let us be gone."

They soon made the necessary preparations for departure and waiting for the close of day to issue from the city, they directed their steps



towards the country of the Memacenni. Mounted upon good horses, they travelled all night, and ere the morning dawned, were so far removed from Shiraz, that they proceeded without apprehension. When they had reached the neighbourhood of the Caleh Sefid, preserving all proper caution in their enquiries, they found their way to the abode of the renowned robber-chief. In a deep recess of one of the most dreary and stony branches of the mountain range, they discovered a village, walled and turreted, and this they were informed was the usual residence of Iskender and his immediate followers, the tribe itself, being dispersed in villages and tents throughout the surrounding region.

Ali and his sister at once directed their steps thither, and when they entered the gate enquired for the chief. His house was scarcely to be distinguished from others of the village. It was a low flat roofed tenement, built of sunburnt bricks covered with reeds and plastered over with mud and chopped straw. Its only mark of distinction were two good horses, ready caparisoned, tethered before

the door. It was towards the close of day when they arrived. Ali dismounting first, enquired of a rough and unwashed menial, where was Iskender Beg, and was answered, "he is eating his evening's meal," and, moreover, was invited to enter by that universal invitation among Mahomedans—*bismillah*.

Leaving Fatmeh at the door, he entered a room where he perceived a company of men plunging their hands into a large dish of rice, and too much taken up with what they were about to heed his appearance.

Iskender himself occupied the post of honour, and perceiving a stranger, the room being dark, he forthwith invited him to sit and eat. Ali aware of the proper decorums, did as he was bid, determined to await the end of the meal before he made himself known. At length when all was over and the men arose to wash their hands, Iskender gave himself time to look at his new guest.

"By my soul," said he, "you are somebody. Whence come you? You are welcome, whoever you may be."

"Is your memory so short," said Ali,

“that you do not recollect the sword cutler of Shiraz.”

“O my ill-fortune,” exclaimed Iskender starting from his seat, and rising on his feet, “is it thus my memory serves me! Praise be to Allah, praise be to Allah, that you are come, that your steps have found your way to my unworthy threshold. Welcome, O welcome!”

Upon which he threw his arms about his neck and embraced him, exhibiting so many symptoms of joy, that no one could doubt of his sincerity.

“See, see,” said he to those around, “this is that Ali of Shiraz, of whom I have so often spoken; he saved my life—he gave me a horse—and where is that angel of Paradise, your sister,” he exclaimed turning again towards Ali, “where have you left her, what can I do for your service?”

Ali then informed him that his sister was waiting without, and in two words stated the necessity of the step they had taken, of flying to him for a temporary retreat from persecution.

Iskender immediately rushed out and having sought Fatmeh, made unbounded protestations of his devotion, ordered her to be conducted to the abode of his own women, with directions that every care should be taken of her.

During the short interval which intervened between Ali going into the house to make himself known to Iskender and his return to Fatmeh, an event occurred, which as it afterwards turned out, proved decisive of her future fate. Tired of sitting her horse, Fatmeh had just dismounted, and seeing no one present, she disengaged her veil from her face, in order to enjoy the pleasure of inhaling the fresh air. Suddenly, as if by magic, appeared before her, her husband, followed by his father—Abdallah in person stood in her presence face to face. So great was her surprize, that both father and son had full time to gaze upon her ere she could lower her veil. And when Ali followed by Iskender returned to her, they found her in so great a tremor and so full of alarm, that she could scarcely breathe.

“What has happened?” said Ali, as soon as he witnessed his sister’s emotion.

“What has happened?” echoed Iskender, “has any burnt father here spoken the language of insult?”

Fatmeh only answered by pointing her hand in the direction of the path which Abdallah and Mirza Bauker were taking, their persons being still visible at a distance.

“What of those men?” said Ali.

“What of those men?” said Iskender.

“By your soul,” said Fatmeh to her brother, “that is Abdallah Aga and his father, I saw them with these eyes—I shall die—oh Allah what shall we do?”

“Who are those men,” said Ali turning towards Iskender.

“There?” enquired the robber chief pointing his hand, “those are two dogs without saints, whom we caught the other day travelling the road, and by your soul they made me think of you and your sister for they asked me whether we had seen a man and a maiden proceeding this way. I spoke but few words, but those few were to order them here,

and here they are—but fewer words still shall they speak again.”

Then making a horizontal sign, with his arm, he said :

“ We will cut—we will kill—here Taki,” he cried out to one of his ruffians, “ here, run to those ill-fated dogs, strike and bring their heads here to be placed at the disposal of our guests.”

“ For Allah’s sake,” exclaimed Fatmeh, exhibiting still greater despair than before, “ for Allah’s sake stay your hand.”

“ My friend,” said Ali, “ let us spill no blood, but as you love your children, as your own beard is dear to you, make us free of those men—send them away at once—give them their beasts and their goods, and say to them, a prosperous journey, and may Allah take you under his care, and allow them to depart.”

“ Upon my eyes be it,” said Iskender, “ say to me kill, and I kill—say put out eyes, and I put out eyes—say beat and I beat—say also be generous and I am generous—I will send the burnt fathers away this very moment.”

Upon which he immediately ordered Abdal-

lah and Mirza Bauker to be provided with provisions, their beasts restored and that they should be released from the confinement in the village to which he had condemned them.

They immediately departed, but who can express the joy with which their hearts were filled. Having been taken prisoner by Iskender, they were almost frightened to death when they found that they had fallen into the hands of the Memacenni. Robbed of all they possessed, they were kept in confinement within the walls of the fortified village, and there in despair and dismay they passed their time in hourly fear of being put to death, when sauntering about the street, to their utter surprise, they beheld before them the face of the lost Fatmeh. Alarmed at hearing the voices of men, voices proceeding from Ali and Iskender as they came to seek her, and bewildered by the suddenness of the apparition, they were walking away to give vent to their emotion, when they were overtaken by this sudden order to depart.

"As your soul is your own, and as this beard is mine," said Mirza Bauker seizing his chin, "that was Fatmeh whom we saw."

"What words are these?" said Abdallah. "I know that as well as you, I saw her with these eyes—but how gat she here? are the jins at work or are we anything more than flesh and blood?"

Ere they departed, they had time to enquire whether there had been any arrival at the village, and when it was ascertained that a man and a woman had arrived, such as they were seeking, they then became convinced that that man and that woman, could be no other than Ali and his sister.

Being quit of the village, they determined with great unanimity immediately to bend their steps to Ispahan, and disclose to the Shah the discovery which they had achieved.

"If we do not become something after this," said Abdallah, "I am not a man! see what has been our good destiny. We separate from the Kaka—we are seized, and robbed—we expect to lose our lives, when suddenly we



discover that which we were seeking and are sent away safe and sound. If that is not luck I not know what is !”

“ Yes, yes,” exclaimed old Mirza Bauker, “ and moreover we shall burn the Kaka’s father to boot. The Shah will say *Aferin* to us—well done, well done—but as for the Kaka, he will make his soul jump out of his body.”

“ Wonderful! wonderful!” exclaimed Abdallah, and rode on rejoicing. “ We shall have a *Kalaat*, we shall have white faces—we shall have things—oh our luck! our luck! what will men say !”

They reached Ispahan as fast as their steeds could carry them, and as soon as they entered the city, made straight for the royal palace. They insisted upon being immediately taken before the Shah, and were straightway conducted into the secret apartment where he was seated. As soon as they reached the presence, they fell on their faces, and there remained, until the King exclaimed :

“ Dog’s sons arise and speak.”

“ As we are your sacrifice,” said Abdallah, “ your slaves have been and seen—we have found the weak one.”

"Are you eating dirt," said the Shah, "or do you speak the truth!" his face becoming animated with satisfaction.

"Yes, by the soul of the King," said Abdallah, "the King's good fortune has attended us, and his slaves are come to lay their humble representation at the foot of the throne."

"Where—where? speak!" said the Shah.

"The weak one is with the Memacenni—your slaves saw her there with their own eyes."

"So, is it!" said the Shah in cogitation, "where is Kaka Pembeh?"

Abdallah then explained the whole of their proceedings, shewing the reasons why they had separated from him, and describing minutely how they had suddenly and unexpectedly gained a sight of his wife.

As Abdallah had anticipated, (not by the power of his own wisdom, but by the force of circumstances) he was made much of at court, as soon the success of his mission was announced; for the Shah had been in so great a state of ill-humoured excitement since he had lost, both his mistress and his jester, that it

became dangerous for any one to approach him.

The grand vizier had longed for the occurrence of some event to turn the royal thoughts into a new channel, and when he heard of the arrival of Abdallah and of the news he brought, he clapped his hands in joy and exclaimed :

“ Praises be to the prophet, our heads are worth more to day than they were yesterday.”

The result of Abdallah’s communication to the Shah, was an expedition to the southward.

The Shah announced it as his intention to undertake a hunting excursion upon the most extensive scale, but it was soon seen by the numbers of men, both horse and foot which were ordered to be in readiness, that something more than hunting the wild beasts of the mountains was in contemplation. His impatience to put foot in the stirrup was well seconded by that of the grand vizier, who had lately secretly groaned under the tyranny of his royal master’s irritability of temper, and it

was not long before so considerable a camp was collected, that people asked, what nation was about to be conquered ?

Abdallah and his father having regained peaceable possession of their house, hoped all their troubles were now at an end, but what was their dismay when they were ordered, on the part of the Shah, to hold themselves in readiness to act as guides to the expedition, as soon as it should have reached the country of the Memacenni.

“What ashes have fallen on our heads?” exclaimed Mirza Bauker, “here am I a white beard—what can I do?”

“It was an evil hour when we fell into the hands of that unsainted robber,” echoed Abdallah, “what are peaceable men like ourselves to do among lion eaters?”

All their lamentations were without avail, they buckled on their swords, drew on their boots and appeared at the appointed hour, joining the numerous cavalcade that issued from the great city upon the day of the Shah’s departure.

Nothing of any consequence occurred on the road, until the little army (for so it might be called), reached the Caleh Sefid. The Shah's success in the chase had been so great, that it seemed fitting to erect a *Kelleh Minar*, a pillar of skulls, as a memorial of the event, on the summit of which a spike was left vacant to receive the head of the ostensible object of the chase, that of the renowned Iskender Beg himself.

As soon as it was known among the Memacenni that the expedition was intended to act against them, Ali and Fatmeh were at once struck with the danger of their position. They were in the hands of a man, of whose true character they were imperfectly acquainted, who, out of love to them, they could not expect would risk his own existence and that of his tribe, and, for a reward, would no doubt deliver them up without compunction into the hands of their enemies. But little did they know Iskender, and still less the virtues of the wandering tribes. They immediately addressed themselves to him, and Ali speaking for both, said :

"We see the misfortune that we have brought upon your house—the Shah is directing the steps of an army against you—this must not be—give us leave to depart—we will go elsewhere, and Allah will protect us."

"What words are these?" said Iskender with vivacity; "do you take the Memacenni for dogs, that they should turn away the stranger who seeks protection at their door? Such a thing was never known—we are men of ancient days—we have eaten salt together, and, therefore, we die or live together—collect your cares into a heap, and sit down quietly upon them—sleep on your disquietude and smoke your pipe peaceably without alarm. Besides, O my brother, did you not save the life of Iskender Beg? Can he yearn towards you with one side of his heart and forget you with the other? No, his heart is all one, one whole—yours altogether. Be not afraid, we have the means of opposing forty Shahs, were they to come with forty thousand horsemen."

"But what is your mode of resistance?" said Ali, "you cannot oppose the power of the

Shah, with the frail walls and the tottering gates of this village."

"No—no!" said Iskender, "we are not men of towns and villages. We have holes and caverns in the mountains which none but ourselves are acquainted with, and therein we can bid defiance to the Shah and all his ancestry. Thither will we fly, and thither seek for refuge. There you will see what the Memacenni are, and to what extent they can burn the fathers of their enemies."

"What can we say," said Ali, "we are in your hands, whatever you command us to do, we will do, and moreover when the time for action comes, here is one hand, pointing to his outstretched arm, which will be ready to do good service, and in that hand will be a good sword, and upon that you may depend. The sword cutler of Shiraz has not made swords for nothing."

It was not long after this conversation had taken place, that Iskender called together the elders of his tribe, and laying before them the state of things, and the danger which threatened them they determined at once to abandon their villages, and to take to their mountains.

Activity very soon succeeded council, and the whole country was seen covered with processions of men, women, children, cattle laden with domestic furniture, and horses, mares, camels, asses and mules all with their heads turned towards the ascent of the adjacent mountains.

Iskender was not slow in putting his own family into motion, and with his wives and slaves, Fatmeh consorted, taking her station in the procession as the guest of the family. The rudeness of the ascent to the mountain holds would have frightened those unaccustomed to the dangers of savage life, and Fatmeh would have looked up in dismay, to certain dark indentations at the summit of apparently an inaccessible rock, had she not observed the dexterity with which all impediments were overcome by her hardy companions. After much toil and labour, she and they succeeded in reaching a cavern, which was to be their habitation, until the emergency should have passed away, whilst the men took possession of another close at hand, and thus the whole mountain, abounding in similar



cavities, by preconcerted arrangements, was occupied by the whole tribe, every family adopting a cavern, like bees in the cells of the honeycomb. Similar emergencies had often taken place, and had been met by similar expedients.

Iskender, however, who felt that an attack headed by the Shah in person, might become of more importance than one led on by one of his chiefs, took more than usual precautions, although in truth the passes were so difficult of access, that he felt persuaded, no other missiles than the impending rocks, encompassing the road through which the invaders must necessarily pass, would be sufficient, if properly dislodged and directed, to impede their passage.

In discussing the question as to his power of defending himself, he pointed out a still more distant cavern, which he asserted, would serve as a last resource, in case the enemy should succeed in driving them from their present position. That cavern, he described as possessing a mysterious depth, which had never yet been fathomed, but the general be-

lief was, that it possessed an exit in some far distant spot. He asserted it to be under the special protection of the Dives and Peris, who had long made it their head-quarters, and from whence they sent detachments, either to assist or to annoy, all those who might have gained their favour or incurred their displeasure.

“So,” said Iskender, “whatever happens, be the Shah afar off, or be he near, your sister has nothing to fear ; for by Allah, she is a Peri herself, and therefore she would only be going amongst her own people, should she be obliged to seek refuge in the cave.”

Fatmeh kept up her courage to the best of her power in this critical position of her affairs, but she could not help feeling great doubt, and consequent apprehension as to the result. Any act of treachery might be fatal to her, for although she and her brother placed full confidence in the honesty and fidelity of Iskender, yet could they flatter themselves that all his followers would be equally honest and faithful? On the contrary, might they not expect, should the Shah be unable to prevail by force, that he would by bribery? Possessed by such

doubts and misgivings, which they did not venture even to hint to their generous host, lest he might think them ungrateful, they passed their time very miserably. It was now impossible to recede—the mysterious cavern was their last refuge, beyond which they only saw death, or what they esteemed the greater evil of the two—slavery.

In the mean while, the Shah advanced into the very heart of the country, and was encamped at the foot of the mountain, at whose summit Iskender, his guests and tribe had taken refuge.

His Majesty had not been slow in making known the object of his expedition, and had sent repeated summonses to Iskender and the elders of his tribe, to descend from their fastnesses, and repair to his stirrup—offers of amnesty were proposed, provided he delivered up his visitors, and threats of vengeance denounced in case such proffers were unheeded.

They were unheeded, for the gallant mountaineer was true to his word, and preserved inviolate that hospitality for which he and his tribe had often risked their security. It was

at this juncture, when the Shah excited by a decided defiance of his power, requiring some faithful councillor to allay his ardour in attacking a wily enemy on his own ground, or to concert schemes to circumvent him by stratagem, it was under these circumstances that the arrival of Kaka Pembeh was announced.

This worthy, from the moment he had embarked at Abusheher to his appearance at the King's camp, had undergone so much misery and disappointment, that he longed to make his story palatable to the royal ears. He was, in truth, broken with fatigue, cast down with apprehension, scorched by the sun, his garments way-worn, and he cut so rueful a figure that he hoped by that alone, to soften the King's heart towards him. We must allow him to narrate his own adventures, which he did when called to appear before his royal master.

"How is this," said the King, as the wretched jester stood before him in fear and trembling—"whence come you, or wherefore are you come at all?"

"As I am your sacrifice," said Kaka, "my

soul is become water, and the liver of your slave has left its place; had your slave not been employed on the King's service, he would say that he could conceive no misery greater than that which he had lately devoured, but praise be to Allah, when the sun of the royal countenance shines, all other suns are sure to shine also. Whose dog am I, that should say otherwise?"

"Tell your story, little man," said the King, "and then swear on the King's head that you have spoken the truth—the Shah hears you."

"As I hope for mercy and condescension," said the jester, "as I am a dog, less than the least dog, as I pray for long life to the Shah, and perdition to his enemies, what I am about to unfold—I swear is the whole truth. In the first place, saving your royal presence, let your slave empty his whole heart by one long, comprehensive and enlarged malediction against all dervishes—let them all burn—let all their fathers and grandfathers burn—let them all be pounded in a mortar—blown from bombs—impaled on living stakes—all the miseries which your slave has undergone have arisen

from a dervish—the bankrupt dog — and Allah only knows whether he was a dervish after all. This cousin of Satan enticed your slave into a boat that swam on the sea, and which looked very pretty close to the shore—he came not himself, but fled as soon as he had persuaded your slave that he was close upon the heels of the weak one of whom he was in pursuit—*Amán! Amán!* O pity, pity. By the soul of the centre of the universe, and by his royal crown I swear that your slave's liver is turned upside down, even now at this moment when he recollects what he endured in that ship without a saint.

“ Let the condescension of your Majesty's royal thoughts turn themselves to where your humble slave was seated in the midst of the great sea, there he was on a piece of wood called a ship, with high waves on one side and high waves on the other, all and each apparently eager to swallow him up; and not satisfied with that, inflicting upon him a malady which not all the united doctors of Ispahan could either produce or quell—there he was straining and looking—straining at the malady and

looking with dismay at the waves—then fearing lest the bankrupt ship would roll over and over, notwithstanding he pushed hard to keep it straight. And this please your Majesty, was unceasing, and when we were out of sight of land, in vain we called upon the steersman to put us in sight of it again, the dog's whelp only laughed and said, 'fear not and Allah is merciful,' until it began to blow such a tempest, that he also thought it right to look serious—and such a tempest that if your Majesty will condescend to look into your slave's mouth, he will see proofs of it, for where several teeth are gone, there were good ones just before it began to blow, and when he looked towards the wind and happened to open his mouth, the unsainted wind got in, and by its violence blew the teeth down your slaves throat. This by the royal soul, is particularly true!"

"Swear that again," said the Shah—"this is no child's play."

The Kaka continued, "Your slave swears that this was only the least of his evils, for Allah! Allah! where was he to sleep? where and what could he eat? The world had gone

back from him, did he venture to kneel to his prayers, down he fell—did he venture to say his Bismillah, the wind blew the words back into his throat, and as Allah is great, this proved a miracle, for blown back as they were into his body, there they continued raising a tempest within him and allowing him no rest. Mashallah! Your slave saw and did wonderful things, but when after ten thousand and forty difficulties, the ship got, at length, to that unblest city of Basora, and your slave could land and proceed to discover the object of his search—let the asylum of the universe consider what were his feelings, when he was told that no Fatmeh had arrived—that no one had received news concerning her; and, therefore, his last resource was to cry *wahi! wahi!* and to walk round and round his little finger. Your slave then exclaimed—what is to be done? He, at length, perceived that his beard had been laughed at by the dervish, and then he cursed dervishes. He would have returned by land; but was told that the road was so circuitous that he would not be able to reach the foot of the throne for months, perhaps, for a year—there was but



one road left, and that was the one he had come—he was left without an alternative—your slave was impelled by one only thought, which was to fulfil the orders of the asylum of the world. He has returned—here is his unworthy neck, and here is his head—they are the only offering he has brought from his travels. In the name of Allah let the Shah strike—what more can he say?”

The Shah was so much amused by the account his jester had given of his travels, and his laughter so much excited, an event which had not occurred since that worthy's departure, that his Majesty's displeasure had considerably abated, and the utmost violence he inflicted on this occasion, was to say—*Begone fool!* words which sounded like the music of the spheres in the Kaka's ears. He accordingly knelt down and kissed the ground, but he was not long permitted to enjoy his ease, for events were about occurring likely to try the nerves of his heart even more than the terrors of the sea.

The troops of the Shah having attempted in vain to storm the position taken by Iskender—

a pause ensued, when a traitor appeared from the ranks of the invaded, who, for the consideration of a sum of money, offered himself to lead the way by a circuitous bye path to the very rock where the chief of the Memacenni had taken refuge. His offer being accepted, and proper precautions taken to secure his fidelity, a picked detachment of men, headed by the bravest officers were selected to follow the guide, and their departure was fixed upon for that very night.

Having made all the necessary arrangements, the Shah called Kaka Pembeh, together with Abdallah and Mirza Bauker to his presence, and spoke to them as follows.

"Dogs without compare, and filth of abomination! The Shah has hitherto overlooked your delinquencies, he has allowed his shadow to fall over you, and you have been living on as if there was no such thing as death; but now open well your ears and hear. The Lady Fatmeh is on the summit of yonder mountain. She must be in the royal presence by to-morrow at noon. You are all three to head the troops which proceed to the attack, if you fail, recol-

lect that birds of prey are swarming over our camp, and that carcases are wanted to feed them. Go—the Shah has spoken.”

The unfortunate wretches looked at each other in dismay. They fell to trembling and their knocking knees could scarcely conduct them from the presence of the King without falling. Fearful of being remarked by their rigorous master, in making the most abject prostrations, they hoped to conceal their perturbation, and when they said or tried to say, “*Be cheshm,*” or upon our eyes be it, it was remarked that an odd sound took place, like the inarticulations of a choaking throat. When they were out of the royal hearing, Mirza Bauker first spoke and said :

“What can an old man and an old merchant do among fighting men ? what service can I perform ? I shall die—see these poor old legs and see that mountain top—how am I ever to get there ?”

“Accursed be the day that I ever thought of marriage,” exclaimed Abdallah, “curses be upon beauty, upon women with stag eyes and cheeks of the rose ! Say that we get to the top of the mountain, yet have we not those

unsainted Memacenni to cope with when we get there? My liver is fast running into water. I feel it oozing through my hands already."

"What do you complain of brother," said the Kaka to Abdallah. "You have got a wife to seek at the top of the mountain, the beloved of your choice, but what am I to do, who care neither for the wife, nor her husband, nor her husband's father, nor any of their ancestry. My going is pure child's play. Please Allah you will proceed first, and your humble slave will be quite satisfied to give up all the merit of success to you."

But notwithstanding their various lamentations, no alternative was left, and they, therefore, made their preparations; the details of which did not fail to afford subject for laughter to the whole camp, from the Shah on his musnud, to the lowest stable hind in the field. The old Mirza appeared with a spear and shield. His son carried a match-lock gun, whilst the Kaka's body was intersected at right angles by a sword as long as himself. Their departure gave a tone of merriment to the ex-

pedition, which otherwise considering the real danger with which it was likely to be attended was considered as any thing but a joke.

In the meanwhile, Iskender having acquired confidence by the success which had hitherto attended his efforts at defence, did not cease to cheer the hearts of Fatmeh and Ali by the hope of soon being free of the Shah and his troops.

“ May you live for ever,” exclaimed Iskender. “ As I love my soul, I swear, that we shall soon be emancipated, and then *Inshallah*, we will give a grand entertainment to the whole tribe. We will roast sheep and make pilloes.”

Ali, however, could not comfort himself by the same feeling of security which actuated his host. He felt that when a despotic King takes the field against a subject, it is not a little that will deter him from perseverance. He himself never ceased to be on the watch, particularly before the dawn, when he felt that the attack would be made, if ever it were made. He dreaded treachery, and so much did he apprehend some sudden onset, that he always urged his sister

to be ready to fly at a moment's notice, a precaution which she seconded with all her power, for she was not slow to acknowledge the great danger of their situation.

It was on the very next morning after Iskender's reiterations of confidence in their security, that Ali keeping watch at the entrance of the cavern, before the dawn, and whilst nature reposed in silence under the influence of the fading light of the moon, that he heard or thought he heard the distant sounds of horses' feet. They were very faint, and he would have doubted his powers of hearing, had his apprehension not been confirmed by the barking of the dogs belonging to the tribe. Although this was no uncommon circumstance, still he perceived by their excited manner, that something more than usual was in the wind. He again lent an anxious ear, and walking forwards some distance, he became certain that in addition to the horses' hoofs, he also heard the clang of arms and the sounds of men's voices. His first impulse was immediately to run where the women reposed, to awaken his sister and to urge her to be prepared for flight. He

then sought out Iskender, who was soon on the alert, and who having also heard the sounds of the coming assailants was not slow in preparing himself for defence. This brave man at once became aware of his danger. He bewailed in anxious words, that he was become the victim of treachery, for he asserted that few of his tribe were acquainted with the path which led to his position. He instigated Ali immediately to accompany his sister to the mysterious cavern, there to take refuge until the danger were over, and conjured him should the enemy make their way thither, to hide themselves within its intricate avenues, and there patiently to await the result. Ali was anxious, both to save his sister and to assist his friend. He, therefore, accompanied her with all haste to the cavern, and having left her at its mouth with injunctions to watch the progress of the attack, he returned with the rapidity of lightning to Iskender who having called together as many of his followers as he could muster, was preparing himself to meet his assailants. But he was not slow in perceiving that resistance

would be hopeless, in case the enemy were at all numerous, for the tribe taken thus unawares, shewed themselves tardy in responding to the call of their chief, and soon, alas! exhibited symptoms of their determination to disperse and save themselves in the intricacies of the wilderness of mountains which surrounded them.

Cries and yells, and accents of haste and flight were heard in every direction, which disheartened those who were willing to resist, and which, indeed, indicated that the case of the brave Iskender was quite hopeless. He and Ali waited until they perceived the head of the column of the royal troops appearing among the rocks and brushwood of the steep ascent, and then slowly retreated towards the cavern, where Fatmeh was awaiting the awful result with fear and apprehension.

In the meanwhile slow and difficult had been the ascent. The Kaka with his desponding companions had passed the night in scrambling over rocks and execrating their destiny. In the dusk, they looked upon every indefinite object as a Memacenni—every shrub was a



robber and every stick a gun. As the morning dawned and they approached the cavern, their fears increased. They each, in their turn, made pretexts for lagging behind, but when they perceived the King's troops on the summit and heard shouts of success, they then hastened to join them, and became the most vociferous of the party.

"Mashallah! we have done well!" exclaimed Cottonwool, as he drew a long breath and stood on the crest of a rock.

"Whose dogs are the Memacenni," said Mirza Bauker, "that they should stand before us?"

"We have not caught her yet," remarked Abdallah, as he cast his eyes about in every direction.

The Kaka turning himself towards the mouth of the mysterious cavern, which was not very far distant, espied the white veil which enveloped Fatmeh, and perceiving Ali and Iskender with his gang retreating thither, he set up a shout, pointing to the spot, and immediately ordered the troops to march thitherwards.

"Seize her—seize her," he cried out to the captain, "that is her. If you wish to call your soul your own—go—run, bring that weak one hither—kill everything but her."

Accordingly a rapid charge was made. Ali, who had by this time joined his sister, having perceived the fatal extremity to which they were reduced, seized her by the hand and exclaimed :

"In the name of Allah let us save ourselves."

"They darted into the very recesses of the cavern, and vanished just when the Shah's party, accompanied by the Kaka and his companions, had reached its orifice.

The faithful Iskender seeing that all was over, made one desperate effort to save his guests, and planted himself at the entrance of the cave in fierce opposition to his assailants, hoping thereby to give the fugitives time to seek a hiding place. No one ventured single-handed to approach him, wielding a sword of no ordinary dimensions, his powerful form and resolute countenance, kept every one at bay ; and although

the Kaka and his companions standing in the rear, did not cease roaring out :

“ Seize, slay, kill, crush his soul, demolish his liver,” and such like expressions, still there he stood, no one approaching him.

At length, Iskender seeing some of his assailants preparing their matchlock guns to fire at him, announced that he was ready to surrender provided his life was saved, a proposition which having been referred to the Kaka was accepted, and his arms being pinioned, he was thus made prisoner, he and his followers, and conducted before the jester and his companions.

“ Dog of a Memacenni !” exclaimed the Kaka, “ where is the woman ?”

“ What do I know,” said Iskender, “ the cavern is large and so is the world—Heaven only knows where she is.”

“ Go, seek her and bring her hither,” said the Kaka, “ or by the head of the King, the world will soon be too small for you.”

“ Orders are easily given and words are easily spoken,” replied the robber chief, “ but it will

require more wit than your humble slave's, and, perhaps, more than even your's to seek her in this awful place, where no one under the rank of jin has ever ventured to proceed."

This speech threw no little terror into the heart of the Kaka and his companions, for they had already begun to look upon their prisoner as something of the devil kind, and his words and gestures confirmed their fears. They found it was in vain to give orders, where no one was willing to proceed, for men and officers overtaken by fears of supernatural agencies all drew back from the search. At length, the trio having satisfied themselves that they had discovered the place of Fatmeh's retreat, and in fact secured her person could her hiding place be found, they determined to leave the troops to keep watch at the mouth of the cavern, and proceed to give an account of their proceedings to the Shah, taking the prisoner Iskender with them.

Having descended to the camp, they straightway sought an audience of the King.

"How is this?" said the Shah, when he

perceived them and their prisoner, "how is this, have you brought me a man instead of a woman?"

The crafty jester perceiving that he would, perhaps, have played his last anticks in this world should he not succeed in exciting the Shah's mirth, put forth the whole of his craft to produce that effect, and screwing up his body as he spoke into its best contortions, and inflecting his voice into its most varied tones, he said:

"Let the countenance of the asylum of the universe only shine but this once on his slave, and he will tell all."

"He and these bits of scum," pointing to Abdallah and Mirza Bauker, "having left the august presence, arrayed themselves for the fight, and looking like Rustams about to seek the White Demon, ascended yonder mountain with so much zeal for the service of the King of Kings, that they left portions of their unworthy bodies on all the rocks and stones over which they stumbled, may maledictions overtake them and the Memacenni. Having driven the enemy from yonder hole, they stood on the

rock and looked into another, where they saw with their eyes the Lady Fatmeh, wrapt in her veil and ready to be taken. Your slaves immediately proceeded thither, when reaching the entrance, they perceived the weak one within the cavern flying for her life, and this son of a burnt father," pointing to Iskender, "standing in array against your slaves. What did your slaves do? they seized him, bound him, and brought him hither."

"And, wherefore, dog of a mountebank," said the Shah, "did you not bring the woman also?"

"As I am your sacrifice," said the Kaka, "in that consists the whole of my story. We have got the woman safe within the cavern—there she is as safe as my tongue is within my mouth—but as true as the asylum of the world hath royal ears—as certain as his royal heart beateth within his royal breast, so true is it that that unsainted cavern is the residence of jins, he devils and she devils, monstrous dragons, fairies, spirits and gholes, and every other similar abomination, and that none of the sons of men have hitherto ventured within

it—such is the truth—thither is the Lady Fatmeh fled—none of the royal troops would follow her. This cow of a Memacenni would not follow; we three pieces of dirt could not follow, although we put one leg before the other; yet, as true as the Shah sits on his throne, I swear, that instead of going forward we walked backwards, and thus situated—thus without power—without help, we are come to rub our foreheads upon the royal threshold, and to seek relief from the royal mind.”

“Bring hither my horse,” exclaimed the Shah, “order out the gholams—we will ourselves proceed to the cavern, and if ye have told me a lie, by the Shah’s jika I swear, that the Shah will make death uneasy to you.”

Immediately the whole camp was in motion, the body guard were summoned to appear, they were soon mounted and in array, and before an hour had elapsed, the Shah was in his saddle, and the cries of the heralds and executioners had announced his departure.

Kaka and his companions followed in silent trepidation, but, at the same time, swaggering

with confidence, certain to find the object of their search, and in such august company, ready to meet whatever devilry the cavern might choose to pour forth.

Iskender properly escorted, was appointed guide to the expedition, and although his whole thoughts were intent upon protecting Ali and Fatmeh from the King's vengeance, yet he lost not for a moment his presence of mind, or debased himself by fawning and adulation.

"Whatever is—is!" he exclaimed to himself in a consolatory sigh, as he proceeded to his post at the head of the procession, and after having picked his way through the rocks, which encumbered the sides of the steep ascent, he, at length, succeeded in placing his Majesty in safety at the very entrance of the mysterious cavern.

After allowing himself and party breathing time, and a consultation having been held upon the best mode of proceeding in the search, the Shah alighted from his horse, and announced his intention of walking forward in



person. The Kaka had in the meanwhile made anxious enquiries of the officer on guard, whom he had left on the watch, whether anything or any body had issued from the cavern, when being assured that all was safe, he assumed such an air of swagger and self-confidence, that he dispelled in great measures the fears generally entertained concerning the mysterious inhabitants of the place. As the royal party began to make their way into the dark and lofty cave, great was the commotion which their appearance produced amongst the innumerable bats and birds which made it their residence, and so strange was the noise created by the flapping of their wings, and their fittings to and fro, that it was not impossible such proceedings might have given rise to the popular superstition concerning it.

True was it, however, that almost every man within the cave, beginning with the Shah and descending to the meanest foot-boy, were prepared to see something extraordinary and to meet with strange adventures.

When his Majesty had reached the very

centre without meeting any impediment, he ordered Iskender to stand before him, as well as the Kaka and his companions.

“Where is she?” said the Shah, “father of dogs, speak—wherefore are we come here if we find not what we seek?”

“As I am your sacrifice,” said Iskender, “the cavern is large—full of hollow places which branch out into various directions—who can tell whither they may lead?”

“’Tis evident the woman has secreted herself—light torches and send men in various directions,” said the King, “a handsome reward attends him who finds her.”

Upon which detached parties proceeded in every direction where the cavern diverged, whilst the Shah took his station in the centre thereof, the Kaka, Abdallah and Mirza Bauker standing before him and awaiting the light of his countenance. Of a sudden a cry was heard which indistinctly reached the ears of the Shah, and soon a messenger, with a torch in his hand, announced that the brightness of day was perceived in a distant part, and that an

exit had been found. Thither the Shah and his suite immediately repaired, and true enough he found an entrance to the cave, part of which had apparently been fashioned by the hands of man.

As soon as Iskender was conducted to this place he exclaimed :

“ May the Shah live for ever, this is the real abode of the jins and the peris—this is of what we have been told.”

“ But where is the Lady Fatmeh ?” exclaimed the Shah with impatience, when turning up his eyes he perceived a rock, standing conspicuous in the entrance, sculptured into the figure of a woman. As soon as Iskender perceived it he fell to the ground and exclaimed :

“ Allah, there is but one Allah—did not your slave speak the truth ? this is the work of the jins—this is the lady,” pointing to the rock, “ she has become stone—where else can we find her ?”

His words evidently produced a strong sensation on all present. The discovery of this singular specimen of workmanship in a place so distant

from the haunts of man, gave rise to feelings of certainty that supernatural powers had been at work, and Iskender's suggestion was immediately adopted as conclusive.

"Allah! Allah!" broke out from every mouth, accompanied by the words "*Ajaib, Ajaib*, wonderful, wonderful!"

Every one present looked into his neighbours face in silence, with awe and fear in his countenance. The Shah too caught the general infection. He said nothing—his silence added greatly to the general apprehension, and the longer it lasted, the more vivid became the impression that they stood on a spot which was under the immediate influence of beings uncontrollable by the power of man. A strong sensation soon began to make itself manifest of the necessity of leaving so dangerous a spot, which was seconded by the Shah himself, and he was not long in returning whence he had come, followed in silence by his whole retinue.

When he reached the open country, and was about to descend the mountain to his camp, he enquired for his former guide, the

Memacenni chief, and ordered him to appear before him. He awaited some time before he renewed his injunction, when he was informed that he was no where to be found ; the vigilant freebooter in the hurry and agitation of the moment, had taken advantage of the negligence of his guards, and had glided away unheeded into the depths and fastnesses of the adjacent mountains. To seize him again, the Shah at once saw would be impossible, and thus finding all his labour vain and his scheme frustrated, he broke out into violent anger, which he intended should fall upon his wretched victims, the Kaka, Abdallah, and Mirza Bauker.

The first of these, however, seeing how affairs were likely to terminate, at once adopted his own line of action, and calculating upon the effects which his buffoonery would produce upon his royal master, suddenly espoused the royal cause with all the vigour of his zeal and humour. With unparalleled effrontery addressing Abdallah and Mirza Bauker, he exclaimed,

“ Oh ye jackass dogs ! oh ye men without

shame! is it thus ye treat the royal beard? leading it up unsainted mountains, into pestiferous holes, out of one bowel of the earth into another, all for nothing, all to screen your mule hides from harm. But as I am the least of dogs, ye shall not get off thus—here, men of blood—here ye strikers and lords of the stick—here, come forth, beat the dog's sons till our Lord of Lord and King of Kings cries stop.”

The Shah in his astonishment at his jester's outbreak, stood mute with one finger in his mouth, uncertain whether to storm and rail or laugh and approve, until at length he became so struck with the singularity of the exhibition, and so amused with his jester's buffoonery, that he allowed him to proceed. The executioners who were always at hand near the King's person, seeing that his Majesty encouraged the Kaka and confirmed his orders by the countenance he gave, immediately seized upon the ill-fated Abdallah and his father, and notwithstanding their cries and supplications, threw their feet into the air and administered so severe a bastinado on their soles, that they writhed with torture.

"Pity, oh pity!" exclaimed Abdallah, "by the head of the King, I am ignorant of all things—I have done nothing—I am a dog—whither she went I know not—pity oh pity!"

"See the wretch," exclaimed the Kaka, "he brings a weak one before the blessed presence of the Shah, he presents her to him—he then causes her to fly—then leads the centre of all things into perverse caverns and over unblest roads, and now he cries pity, oh pity!—by the royal beard, and by my unworthy head, there is no pity—strike, strike," he continued to exclaim, whilst the same punishment was inflicted upon the unfortunate Mirza Bauker, who, in his misery, almost gave up the ghost with pain and fright.

The Shah having, at length, cried *Bus!* enough, he ordered the poor wretches to be thrown on the side of the road, and leaving them to their fate, proceeded on his journey, promising to himself another morning's amusement from the trouble into which he intended to throw his jester as soon as he reached his capital.

The two beaten men, when left to themselves, were heard to bemoan their fate after the following manner :

“O woe ! O woe ! What dirt have we eaten ! Wherefore did our evil destiny lead us to seek this misfortune ! Ashes have fallen on our heads. May we defile the graves of Kings and great people for evermore ! Why did we ever seek their filthy presence ! Wherefore did we forsake our own condition in life ! Whose dog is a King that we should go near him. O woe ! O woe ! Curses on all Khans, on all Mirzas, Executioners and Buffoons ! Curses too upon all beautiful women ! May all houris burn—may their livers drop and their souls perish ! Why did we ever seek her ! O that we were seated on our bench in the bazaar ! O that we had never been near a court ! better is peace with humility, than turmoil with grandeur,—*Amán ! Amán !* pity, pity—who will take care of us ? Whither shall we go ?”

And thus ends our story. Whether the lady Fatmeh became a stone or not, it is for the jins to say, but true it is, that there is a mountain pass on the high road to the coast



of the Persian gulf to this day, which is called the *Dochter* or the maiden, an application, which, perhaps, may have taken rise at the period of this our history. As for Ali, it is plain that he was too active and too clever not to seek safety in flight, and as to Iskender, Allah best knows what became of him, but no one can believe that he allowed himself to be taken, as long as he had a tribe to retreat upon.

---

“Mashallah! O well done!” I exclaimed as soon as my friend had made an end of his story.

“You have, indeed, described a specimen of womankind, which even I, with all the advantages which our better halves obtain over yours, can scarcely believe to exist. But as you live, tell me, what will the King say when he finds the character of woman placed before him in so bright a light—will he believe it possible that such can exist?”

“By your soul,” said the Mirza, “Allah best knows what he will think—but this I know,

---

that he has enough good sense to admire superiority of any kind, and that could such a woman as Fatmeh be found in Persia, he would do his utmost to obtain possession of her. I believe him to be entirely sated with the common place intellect of the women who inhabit his harem—when he hears descriptions of the wit, sense, and accomplishments which exist among the women of Frangistan, he has been heard to exclaim how happy he would be to possess only one such companion, and how soon he would discard the unmeaning faces which surround him.”

“Inshallah !” I exclaimed, “the story which you have just related to me, and which I hope you will repeat to him, will do his mind a vast deal of good, should it be a reflecting mind. Let him ponder over it, as he would over a parable ; a despot will best receive truth, when clothed in fiction, as a child is persuaded to swallow physic, when disguised by sweetmeats. Should he enjoy powers of reflection, he will in this instance learn the value of excellence in woman, and do all in his power to advance her position in society, educating her

mind, and destroying the causes which tend to her debasement, and (by way of encouraging my friend in his vocation,) I added, such a result should it ever become manifest, will prove to you more than aught else, how important is the power of fiction when properly wielded."

In concluding our conversation, we were agreed, that truth discovered by man's own reason and experience, was of infinitely greater advantage to him than acquired through other channels, and that a King such as the Shah, despotic and self-willed, whose natural perversity has been fed by flattery and subserviency, would be more likely to pursue his own discovery, than to adopt the doctrines which might broadly be proposed to him by others.

We then parted mutually pleased ; he promising to inform me, after having related his story to his royal master, of the effect it produced.

## VISIT V.

DURING the winter, the Shah remained constant to the walls of his palace in Tehran, but on the first opening of spring, he ordered the summer residence of the Takht Kajar, its gardens, fountains, and kiosks to be prepared, and thither he repaired, taking with him only a few of his favourites, courtiers and ladies of the harem, for the purpose of enjoying the invigorating air of the mountains, and the delights of the returning season. Among those who accompanied his Majesty, was my friend the poet laureat, who, when the excursion was over, invited me to visit him.

He informed me that during his stay at the Takht, the Shah having settled himself in one of the summer-houses, whose upper rooms command an extensive view over the plain, and which also embrace the whole extent of

the city—had devoted a whole afternoon to quiet and repose, and ordered him to relate a story.

On this occasion, his Majesty deviated from the usual routine of the court, having allowed women to be present, and in consequence had ordered the poet to be so placed that his voice might be heard whilst he could not see the persons of the King and his ladies. He then related the story, which we have just recorded, and he now informed me (as he afterwards heard) that the effect which it produced upon the women was incredulity—incredulity that such a being as Fatmeh could exist. He added, such is the narrow compass of their intellect, that they willingly believe in the existence of giants as tall as cypress trees, or magicians who can turn a mountain into gold; but of the existence of a virtuous and magnanimous woman, they are incredulous.

His Majesty in a subsequent conversation applauded him very much for having selected such a story for such an occasion; for he avowed himself pleased, that his ladies should be taught that woman, when her energies are,

roused, can exercise them as efficiently, and with as much spirit as man.

My friend then told me that the Shah, whose mind is devoted to literature, and particularly to poetry, conversed with him freely upon the arts of invention and story telling. With respect to invention, his Majesty spoke sensibly, and for a monarch very modestly, for he avowed that he had often endeavoured to invent a story, but without success, adducing for a reason, that in order to be able to invent, it is necessary to possess a stock of facts beforehand, upon which to found invention.

"A King," he said, "cannot acquire such a store with the same facility as one who has the power of roaming about the world, in all countries and among all ranks of people. The man who can do that best, should he be endowed with other requisite qualities of the mind, will be the most successful story teller. Of poetry, the range may be less, for sensations exist in every heart, and they form the ground work of that species of invention. His Majesty then requested me," said the Mirza, "in my next essay, to turn my thoughts to matters miraculous and supernatural. He

conceived," he said, "that he himself might compose a story, when he could bring jins, giants and magicians to his assistance: for whenever a difficulty occurred, it was easy to introduce a jin to set it right, and that nothing was so consolatory to a heroine as the certainty, when held in durance vile by a giant, that she might be emancipated by the power of a magician—but," he added, "unless I have those helps, I confess, I feel myself greatly at a loss, for men and women must be what Allah has made them, and it is ever a difficult undertaking to conform to truth."

The Mirza then informed me, that in furtherance of his Majesty's wish, he had composed a story, founded upon a circumstance, miraculous and supernatural.

"But," he added, "far from finding it easy, I have on the contrary, laboured under much difficulty to make it at all interesting. It is easy, in truth, as his Majesty remarked, to introduce the machinery of fabulous and unearthly beings, but the art is, to do so with an appearance of probability, which ought to make the hearer feel that such things might be. If I had

opened the tale by saying, once upon a time there existed a giant so immense, that while he stood upon the earth, he rested his back against the moon, and warmed his hands at the sun: such images would be called extravagant, and preposterous. Or, had I said, that my heroine, apprehending the persecutions of a tyrant, had by the power of a peri thrown herself into an impending cloud, and dissolving herself upon him in a torrent of rain, had drowned him and his followers; such an assertion would so totally destroy verisimilitude, that the effect could only produce ridicule. But, in the story, which I will now relate, I have adopted just so much of what is supernatural, as I hope will give an air of semblance and possibility to my narrative, and this without alarming or greatly offending common sense. I have carried a single incongruity, through a course of natural consequences, which has approached a natural conclusion."

I quite agreed with my friend in his remarks and added, "that the reason why the "Tales of the Thousand and one Nights," are so agreeable



to children is, that their minds not having yet ascertained what is truth, they can bear the recital of stories in which giants, fairies, geniis and magicians, act a principal part with great satisfaction, seeing that their senses have not acquired that degree of experience to feel shocked by impossibilities."

We then settled ourselves in a small room, situated over the entrance gate of his house, called a *Balakhoneh*, or upper house, which, enjoying the shade of the chenar tree, situated immediately before it, as well as the music of a rushing stream, he emphatically called a poet's nest. Here he said he could enjoy meditation, apart from the world, though still in it, surrounded by cheerful objects, and yet not annoyed by obtrusion. We seated ourselves upon his carpet, each with a kalia in hand, and after the enjoyment of a few whiffs, which are ever to the Persian a sort of preliminary, and often an emblem of what he has to say, my friend entered upon his narrative as follows:—

HISTORY OF MOBAREK SHAH AND THE  
MAGICIAN.

AMONG the successors of the great Jenghiz Khan, one was called Mobarek Shah, to whom there occurred an adventure so singular, and which produced consequences so full of results, that had the narrative thereof fallen into the hands of a professed spinner of wit, we doubt not but that he might have composed several pleasant books. We are told that he lived in the city of 'Cashgar, and that he was a Prince of amiable qualities, a great lover of justice, and devoted to the good of his people. He was ever active and zealous in searching out abuses, and frequently strolled about the city in disguise, first adopting one character then another, by which means, he not only became generally acquainted with the tempers and humours of his subjects, but often acquired hints from their conversation upon the art of governing them.

It so happened that in one of these rambles, he determined to refresh his person by taking

a hot bath, and for that purpose he entered the principal *hummum* of the city, disguised as a respectable merchant, wearing the usual sheep-skin cap, which was, indeed, commonly adopted by all ranks, from the monarch to the peasant. Having performed the necessary ablutions, he lay himself down on a carpet, in his bathing clothes, in order to cool previously to dressing. He had scarcely done so, when a hard featured, weather-beaten man, coarsely dressed, made his appearance, and spreading a carpet close to where Mobarek Shah lay extended, began to undress himself preparatory to entering the bath. He possessed a quick and penetrating eye, and slowly divesting himself of the shawl round his waist and folding up his cloak, he cast his eyes about him with an inquisitive look, and particularly upon his neighbour, whose handsome clothes appeared to attract his notice.

The hall in which this took place was surrounded by a lofty cupola, lines being passed across it in various directions, on which were hung the bathing linen to dry. Surrounding it, on elevated platforms, were spread carpets,

upon which, those who had bathed were reposing, whilst other carpets were ready prepared for those who might be expected. The bathing attire consisted of a white napkin round the head, of a large shawl or wrapper thrown loosely over the body, and of a second wrapper tied round the waist, falling to the ancles, and the congregation thus attired and in repose, looked like corpses laid out in their winding sheets in a large tomb. Such was now the case—not a word was uttered—no one moved about, excepting the bathing attendants, who presented a pipe, coffee, or sherbet to those just issued from the bath, and the whole was conducted with a decency and decorum, which proved how gentle were the manners of the good people of Cashgar.

On this occasion, just as the stranger before mentioned, and whom I shall call Chacal Beg, was about to take off his shirt, having already put on his middle wrapper, his neighbour the Shah reposing with closed eyes; quiet prevailing throughout the hall, at that moment, a strange and unearthly rum-



bling sound was heard, and instantly succeeded by so violent and so sudden a concussion, that soon all the inmates of the building were aroused and thrown into alarm by the awful consciousness of an earthquake, and as a poet said, all the lions were turned into lionesses from very fear. Without a moment's thought, every one jumped up and rushed out of the building, all excepting Chacal, who paused and looked around him.

The earthquake disturbed all the dust in the building, which flying about blinded men's eyes, and greatly increased the confusion—the linen dropped from the lines, the long poles which reposed against the walls, used for extending the linen fell with a crash; the tin and brass pots, the crockery, and things suspended on high fell—and the even walls which had stood for ages, were heard to crack, and in some parts rent from top to bottom. During this confusion, Chacal stood unmoved—the clothes of the bathers had dropped from their places and were strewn about the floor. He deliberately began to dress himself again, but instead of

returning to his own, he coolly helped himself to those of his neighbour, the Shah Mobarek—he put on his caba, adopted the shawl around the waist, covered himself with his handsome cloak, and lastly fitted on his cap, leaving his own garments, with his weather beaten cap, to the possession of whomsoever might choose to adopt them. Having so done, he slipped out of the bath by a back door, and finding himself in the street, strode away in haste, leaving that quarter of the town as far behind him as he could. He entered the great bazaars, where he found all the world in a high state of consternation, and mixing in the crowd, at length entered a barber's shop with the intention of getting his head shaved.

The barber was engaged in shaving, and when Chacal appeared, he said to him :

“Light of my eyes you are welcome, sit, have a little patience, and I will soon be at your service.” As he continued to use his razor, he also continued to exercise his tongue, saying, “although we have had a misfortune in the earthquake, yet praise be to Allah, you are come at a fortu-

nate hour for shaving. You slave has made use of his astrolabe this morning, and the moon tells him we may diminish the quantity of hair in the world with safety. God be thanked, we are understanders of things! May the riches of the Shah increase, his kingdom is not wanting in astrologers—Cashgar is a blessed place.” Upon this, having finished his customer’s adjustment, and duly washed and trimmed him up, he invited Chacal to take his place, to which that personage acceded, after doffing his newly acquired cap, depositing it on the seat he had just quitted.

When this new head was placed before the barber he exclaimed,

“Mashallah! wonderful head have we got here, the wise man is known before he speaks, the fool is known because he speaks. The wise recognise each other, whilst the fool thinks all are fools but himself.”

He then began his work, exclaiming and making use of flattering expressions, to which Chacal listened in silence. During this interval, the customer who had been shaved, retreating to the place where Chacal had left his

cap, was taken up in inspecting that commodity with evident marks of intense curiosity: turning it first to the left then to right, he looked within it, and then examined the piece of shawl sewn on the top. Having done this with an expression of surprise not unmixed with awe, he gazed upon Chacal, still continuing his survey of the cap, at one time putting it down, then taking it up again, when feeling something hard within the lining, he inserted his hand and drew forth two small seals. No sooner had he inspected them, then recognizing the royal signets, his cheek turned pale and his hand trembled as he replaced them in their original position, and then returning the cap where he had found it, he remained transfixed with surprise, and uncertain what to do. This customer happened to be a journeyman to the Shah's principal cap maker, who having only a few days before been at work upon this very cap, knowing that it was intended for the royal head, at once, recognized his own stitches and fashion. The conclusion to which he came, particularly when he had seen the seals, was that the person to



whom it belonged, could be no other than the Shah himself.

He had never seen the King, although he was aware that he frequently perambulated the city in disguise, and the more he gazed and cogitated, the more he became convinced that the person before him was that august personage.

He soon communicated the discovery he had made to another customer newly arrived, who having caught the awe inspiring contagion, was not slow in informing the passers bye in the street, that the Shah himself was then in the shop, and actually having his head shaved. The commotion produced by this circumstance, in so remote a quarter of the city, may be better imagined than described, for although it was esteemed dangerous for a subject to recognize his King when supposed to be incognito, still, in this instance, it was impossible to restrain peeping, sly looks and lingerings at the corner of the streets.

When Chacal arose from under the hands of the barber, to his surprise, on turning round, he discovered several men standing before him,

with every appearance in their looks and com-  
partment of paying him the most unbounded  
respect.

He no sooner proceeded to regain possession  
of his cap, than the journeyman presented it to  
him with every demonstration of the greatest  
deference, making becoming prostrations and  
using appropriate expressions.

“What has happened?” said Chacal, “are  
beards cheap that our’s is to be laughed  
at?”

“We are the slaves of the asylum of the  
world,” said one.

“Whose dogs are we,” said another, “that  
should dare to stand before a King of Kings,  
the refuge of nations?”

“Are ye mad, oh men!” said Chacal, not  
having seized their meaning, “are ye mad, and  
has wind entered your brain. Who am I that  
should thus be addressed? My father and  
mother were honest folks, and I, unworthy that  
I am, am their progeny—what means then  
refuge of nations and King of Kings?”

During this speech, the cap maker’s journey-  
man had whispered to the barber, that he whom

he had just shaved was the Shah, and confirmed his words by the proof he had discovered.

Upon which the barber fairly prostrated himself before Chacal, and said :

“ See the fortunate hour during which the dwelling of your slave has been thus visited ! Praises be to Allah, the stars are true, whatever we poor mortals may say, there is no denying their influence. They have led the footsteps of our King of Kings into my humble dwelling, and have guided this too fortunate hand over the august surface of his imperial head !—Forgive the faults and imperfections of your slave.”

Chacal, during this speech began to gain an insight into his new position, but still he professed ignorance.

“ Wherefore, oh men !” said he, “ do ye speak to me thus ? Cannot a man sit down and be shaved without being called King of Kings—is he to be lauded for nothing, and to be revered for that which he does not possess ? Speak, oh men, and tell me wherefore is this ?”

"How," said the journeyman, "has not your slave seen the imperial seals within the lining of that cap, which his own unworthy hands has helped to fashion and make. 'Tis by that we knew that none but our King of Kings could enjoy possession of such seals; and, therefore, that you, oh Shah, can be none other than our sovereign, and we your humblest of servants."

At hearing these words, Chacal immediately applied his hand into the lining of his cap, and there, indeed, he found the seals.

We must here pause awhile, to explain who and what was the man we have called Chacal Bey.

He was born on the borders of the lake of Van, in the village of Maug, the inhabitants of which are composed almost entirely of families producing Magi or Magicians, and at an early age he was taught many of the secrets of the black art, by which means he could hold converse with demons, and acquired considerable familiarity with jins and other unearthly beings. He had learnt the science of divining by the Koran, of casting fate by dice, of explaining dreams from the cabalis-

tical book, and of taking up serpents without fear of harm. He had, moreover, been inducted into the profound mystery of vivifying a dead body, throwing his own life into it, and leaving his own body dead in its place, and only longed for an opportunity of trying a still greater feat, that of exchanging faces with another, without losing the individuality of either. Thus instructed and educated, he left his country a professed magician. In his dress and appearance, he did not differ from the other inhabitants of Roum, excepting in the sheepskin cap, for his object was to keep his profession a secret, and it was only when the opportunity offered, he asserted his character and practiced his art for the furtherance of his views of obtaining money, of which he was greedy. He made the experiment of exchanging faces with his own father, in which he succeeded so well, that he longed to have an opportunity to repeat it in some more profitable manner. On that occasion it is recorded, that having secured his father in his own image, he himself having become his father, he inflicted upon him so

sound a beating, that he was, the wonder of all magicians.

When he beheld the royal signets, holding them as he did in his hand, his mind was suddenly struck by the thought of the immense advantage which he might derive from this discovery.

The seal of Soloman, he knew was the great talisman which ensured to the possessor the obedience and agency of many supernatural beings, and he also knew that the seals of Kings partook of the nature of that great talisman. What then was his emotion when he found himself in actual possession of two royal seals, instruments of such unbounded importance, that he was not long in making up his mind what to do. Eyeing the barber, the journeyman and the others who were assembled in the shop, he adopted a cast of features, and assumed manners which would confirm them in their suspicions that he was the King, when, at the same time, placing the cap on his head and inserting the seals into his bosom, he stalked out of the shop, saying,

“When the Shah is in disguise let no one

notice him ; he goes upon the business of Allah and the state, let him depart in peace.”

So saying, he immediately quitted that part of the town, walked forward, and having bought a sheet of paper, ink and a drinking cup, he proceeded without the city to a pool of clear water, on the borders of which he seated himself. Here he produced the seals, and having made an impression of them on various parts of the paper by the means of water, he washed them off into his drinking cup, then uttering certain mysterious words of belief, and using a form of invocation proper to the occasion, he drank off the contents of the cup.

Having done this, he felt a strange sensation come over his face, jerking his nose, blinking his eyes, contracting his lips and lengthening his chin and beard, by which he understood that the transformation which he desired was perfected.

He straightway bent himself over the water to inspect his face, when strange to say, instead of himself, he saw one whom he knew must be the Shah being the same he had seen in the bath.

At this sight, he broke out into coarse ejacula-

tions of delight, and without delay bent his steps towards the city. Having entered the gates, he perceived that the guard stationed there, the door-keepers and the officers, eyed him with a certain look of submission and awe, which told him that he was recognized as the Shah, and when he made his way through the streets and bazaars, he every now and then caught the expression of an eye, which indicated humility and apprehension.

Having entered the palace itself, there he was recognized at once, and there, indeed, his troubles began, for how was he to adapt his ignorance to the forms and manner of life of a Shah? He was coarse in his nature, having passed a rude unsettled existence among wild and uncivilized people, and he felt that in undertaking to personify a King, he must make so many mistakes, that in the end they would not fail to create suspicion as to his identity. He found that he was wrong in entering the palace by the principal gate and recollecting himself to be in disguise, he retraced his steps, and after some search, having found the private



entrance which he made no doubt the Shah was wont to adopt on such like excursions, he entered therein.

The doubt which most perplexed him was, whether the King had returned to his palace immediately after the earthquake, or whether he was still absent; but when he found that he had himself obtained precedence, a fact which he ascertained by the prostrations of those who received him at the palace gate, he then became more easy in his mind.

He knew that his face only was changed, his person remaining the same; this was an imperfection in his art which he could not remedy, but wearing as he did the clothes of the Shah, he flattered himself that no remarks on that head could be elicited at present. He perceived by the actions and demeanour of the palace attendants, that when he had got within the private entrance, his incognito ceased, for every one was then on the alert to wait upon him.

The true Shah evidently was expected and anxiety prevailed as to his safety after the occurrence of the earthquake, consequently

when Chacal appeared, universal joy manifested itself. He was conscious that his voice was not changed, and that circumstance made him slow to speak, he, therefore, proceeded in silence, following the footsteps of two under heralds who walked before him and led the way to his own apartment.

As soon as he entered the precincts of the harem, whither it was the custom for the Shah to proceed on returning from an excursion in disguise, the heralds cried with a loud voice.

“ *Shah geldi !* the King is come.”

When they had left him, he was received by the chief of the eunuchs and a band of women, who made a lane for him to pass through, putting forth their best looks to receive the favour of a glance from the royal eye.

Accustomed as they had been to the kind and winning manners of the real King, who always spoke with condescension and affability to every one on his path, they were utterly surprised and awe struck, when they remarked, that on this occasion, he walked by without saying a word, and without even a sign

of recognition to those whom before he never failed to notice. When, at length, he entered his own private room, it was whispered throughout the courts of the palace. "The King is out of humour," and straightway every one was set a thinking.

"What has happened? what news is this? ah, it is the earthquake—damage has been done—poor wretches are ruined—perhaps some have been killed."

These and such like words and speculations were made and expressed; so that a general gloom pervaded the harem, and the hearts of the women and slaves.

Chacal having seated himself, was immediately attended by the head valet, who disrobed him, taking off his dusty garments to his very shirt, and then called in a second man, who forthwith, his arms bare and his skirts girded, approached him, kneaded him all over, rubbed his arms, back, legs and feet, and so entirely took possession of his person, that Chacal could scarcely stir hand or foot.

In this manner was the Shah pleased to be

operated upon, after he had undergone the fatigue of a long perambulation throughout the city, and thus did the operator act, supposing that he was practising upon his real master. He was the King's chief barber and shampooer, his office being to keep the person of his royal master in repair. Inspecting every decay and reporting upon every imperfection, he was surprized whilst he rubbed the head and the nape of the neck, to observe that the right ear possessed a slit which had never before come under his inspection. He paused and looked and looked again. He was in doubt whether to make known his discovery, not willing to speak unless spoken to, when no longer master of himself, and trusting to the known beneficence of his royal master, he exclaimed :

“As your slave is the sacrifice of the asylum of the world—here is a slit!” and at same time touched his ear.

Chacal began to burn like a piece of live coal, so overcome was he by this unwelcome piece of intelligence ; he said nothing, but restricted himself to trying his voice in a

growl, which so startled the barber, that he fairly jumped on one side from apprehension.

Looking into Chacal's face, he discovered him, indeed, to be the Shah, a fact which he began to doubt, when without saying more, though he pondered much, he completed his task and took his leave in all haste.

As soon as he left the palace, he whispered to his acquaintance the observations he had made—that the King's ear had been slit since last he shampooed him, and that his voice was changed since the earthquake, assertions which caused every one to exclaim, "Ajaib, wonderful!"

Chacal having clothed himself from head to foot in royal apparel, the evening meal was then served up in the customary state, by the servants appointed to that office. In so doing, they could not fail to remark that there was something very strange in the whole manner and demeanour of the King—he said nothing—he gazed like one who saw matters of state for the first time—he eyed every thing and every one with curiosity—whatever he did, was full of awkwardness, more

partaking of the manners of a man of the woods, than those of a courtier. After having seized upon the food before him with an avidity and a coarseness of demeanour, unequalled by mule drivers, and having gorged himself to surfeiting, he perfectly electrified his servants, by, at length, uttering one word, and that word was *Shirab*, wine. Now Mobarek Shah, besides being the most polished and urbane prince in the east, was also one of the most pious, one who adhered so scrupulously to the ordinances of the prophet, that he would rather have cut off his hand, than allowed it to be the bearer of the proscribed liquor to his lips. How much the attendants who now heard the order for wine were astonished, it is easier to imagine than to describe — they stood with their mouths open, and their eyes staring, looking at each other, and then at their supposed master, until another order, louder and more affirmative to the same effect, issued from Chacal, which made them flee with apprehension. In an instant, the news rang throughout the palace and the harem, that the Shah

wanted "wine"—men lifted up their hands in astonishment, women giggled and whispered, and exclaimed—every one was in a state of bewilderment, and many began to hint that the Shah had run mad and wanted wine, all in consequence of the earthquake. No other excuse could be alleged than the earthquake,—that event accounted for all—the slit in the ear, the silence, the voracity and grossness, and last of all, the call for wine, every thing was accounted for by the earthquake.

Wine having been procured, it was presented with all proper decorum, by the lord steward, to the supposed Shah, who very soon suited the action to the word, and drank thereof, at one draught, more than had been known to exist within the walls of the palace during the whole reign. Refreshed, invigorated and excited by this act, Chacal acquired courage in his new position, and began to think that he might now safely give his fears to the wind, and enjoy himself with the good things by which he was surrounded.

It was a custom with Mobarek Shah after having partaken of his evening's meal, for the

head eunuch to make his appearance, and inquire which of his Majesty's wives or slaves, it was his pleasure should attend him in order to enliven him by her talents for music, or by her conversation; and for a long time back the answer had invariably been, the Lady Khoshboo. Now the Lady Khoshboo was a princess of the greatest beauty, of much wit and most refined manners, who had so captivated the monarch by her charms, that he was scarcely ever happy out of her company. She had long been the favourite wife—he loved her with a sincere and ardent passion, which was as sincerely and ardently returned, for the sentiments of Khoshboo towards Mobarek were so pure and disinterested, that their loves might have been made the subject of a poem, as fairly as those of the celebrated Leileh and Majnun, or of Ferhad and Shireen. She, be it said, being conscious of her power, and secure in the affections of her lord and master, would not listen to the reports spread concerning him, on the occasion here described, but smiling in her contempt at the falsehood, was only waiting



for the moment when she should be called, as usual, into the presence.

When the head eunuch appeared before Chacal, and bowing low, asked him the question,

“Which of the slaves of your Majesty’s household, does the asylum of the universe command should be brought before the august presence?”

What was the surprise, the astonishment, the horror of the formal man of women, to hear these words, “The fattest!” Fixed to the earth, like one in a fit, the bewildered man stirred neither hand nor foot, uncertain whether he had heard right or not.

“The fattest,” he exclaimed, with a tremulous voice, “did your Majesty say?”

“The fattest,” again exclaimed Chacal, in a voice of thunder; “go bring the fattest—what more do you require, dog? am I not the King?”

The awe-struck eunuch disappeared with singular haste, quaking from head to foot, and convinced that his royal master had been struck by some fatal malady of the brain.

“As Allah is great,” said he retiring, “the

earthquake cannot have done this also! He cannot want a fat slave, because the ground has shaken—or has it, perhaps, shaken all sense from his head.”

However, he went his way, and when every one expected that the Lady Khoshboo would, as usual, proceed to pay her evening visit, and when she herself arrayed in her most fascinating attire, was already making her way to the royal presence, what was her surprise and dismay, and the surprise and wonderment of all, when the head eunuch announced that the fattest of the slaves was ordered to attend! The fall of a thunderbolt could not have excited more sensation. The fattest! the fattest! was echoed about from mouth to mouth, from one end of the harem to the other. Surprise was in every accent, marvel and excitement in every look. Now who was the fattest, was a question not so easy to decide. All the women were ordered to attend, and as they appeared and were arranged in a row for inspection, such laughing and giggling, such animation and tumult had never been known in a Cashgar harem, since the commencement of the

dynasty. All the fat women compared themselves one with the other.

"I am fatter than you," said one,

"You are not."

"I am," said another,

"See here my fat," said a fourth.

"See mine."

"Look how round I am here."

"I am rounder," continued others, *Dilpez* compared herself to *Ferbehgil*—*Shishmanloo* to *Ajebghoraz*, and *Poorshekm* to *Chokchey*. And loud and fierce were the discussions, each one seeking to be the favourite, until *Badboo*, a middle aged slave, one who had no pretensions to charms, and who really possessed no attraction beyond preponderating obesity, was ordered to stand forth, and she after having been measured, weighed and commented upon, was pronounced by acclamation to be the fattest. Having been dressed, washed, and ornamented, she was straightway led to the Shah, and amid the jeers, the sneers, and the astonishment of the whole harem, was paraded to the royal apartment, introduced, and there left.

We must now turn to where Mobarek Shah, having fled from the interior of the bath on the shock of the earthquake, was standing in his bathing clothes in the middle of the street, awaiting, with many others, the result of the catastrophe. No one recognized him in this guise, and he now felt half inclined to acknowledge himself to be the Shah, in order that he might, by his authority, bestow help to those of his subjects, who perchance had suffered by the event. However, as nothing in the immediate neighbourhood of the bath had taken place requiring his aid, after a sufficient interval had elapsed, he retired to take possession of his clothes, anxious to explore what of ruin or disaster might have occurred in the city.

In the confusion which ensued in the bath, in vain he sought for his own apparel—neither cap, nor vest, nor shawl, nor trousers, nor cloak could be found, and after a fruitless search, he was obliged to put up, greatly to his disgust, with the much worn, and little attractive garments, left by Chacal Beg. Never had he before adopted so

entire a disguise ; but as he intended that the penance he was about to endure in these clothes should last but a little while, he abstained from recurring to those expedients, for procuring better, which it is obvious he might have adopted. He sallied forth, and bent his way through the great thoroughfares, loitering about with the intention of redressing any wrong which he might perceive, or bestowing his assistance, wherever it might be required. Just as he was turning from one street into another, where the cupola of a great caravanserai had fallen in, suddenly he felt an odd sensation in the face—a twitching of the nose—a jerking of the eyes, and an enlargement of the lips, for which he could not account, and which must have taken place, exactly at the same moment when a similar metamorphosis took place in Chacal. He paused to consider whence such sensations could arise, but excited by the desire of being useful, and anxious to proceed to the spot where the disaster had occurred, he merely passed his hand over his face, and finding all his features in their right places, hastened on-

wards to the fallen caravanserai. Having reached the scene of action, he discovered that the report was not exaggerated—destruction had overtaken the company of merchants there assembled ; a great portion of their goods were buried in the ruins, and fears entertained that some of their owners were buried with them. Mobarek immediately advanced into the very centre of the confusion, and made himself conspicuous by his exertions in extracting bales, trunks, and packages from the fallen materials. Some of the merchants seeing a suspicious looking person, meanly dressed, and distinguished in no manner from the crowd, excepting by a very unprepossessing appearance, began to inquire who he was, and why he was laying hands upon property not his own, and when they found him still persevering, they thought it high time to defend such an invasion of their property. Mobarek on the other hand, finding that the exertions of the lookers on were not sufficiently vigorous, loudly made remonstrances in words denoting authority, and issued his orders with all the self-confidence produced by high situation.

“Who is this brawler,” said a merchant standing by, “what dirt is he eating? Whence comes he?”

“O little man,” cried out another addressing himself to Mobarek, “are you turned mad all of a sudden, or is your brain perchance buried in the desolation?”

“Hold your peace,” exclaimed Mobarek, “give us more work and less words; who knows whether some unfortunate soul may not be buried in the ruins!”

“And if he is,” said the Daroga or police magistrate who stepped up at the same time, “is it your duty to seek him, little man and great donkey!”

When Mobarek perceived his own officer, and heard himself addressed in such like language, he thought it his duty to throw off his disguise, and advancing towards him, whilst he seized him by the beard, exclaimed, “Dog! what words are these? Do you not see and recognize your King?”

The Daroga first inspecting his face, then casting his eyes over his person, burst into a fit of laughter and exclaimed, “King, indeed!”

Mashallah! the earthquake has shaken men's wits out of their places as well as the cupolas of caravanserais. If you, a poor fakir are a King, what must I be who am a Daroga? Go, go, go be mad some where else, but let these honest folks find their own goods, and bury their own dead."

Mobarek who was in truth the mildest of princes, on hearing these words, grew red with rage, and began to expostulate and beat about him with fury. "Seize the villain," said he to the surrounding crowd, "I who am the Shah, am I to be bearded in this manner by my own slave?"

Upon these words being spoken, a loud and taunting shout was heard to issue from the crowd, the loudest and most excited of the shouters being the Daroga himself. "Madman! madman!" was echoed from mouth to mouth; "here is a burnt father of a Turk who calls himself our King; away with him, strike his mouth, beat him with stripes, away with him."

Mobarek hearing these words, seeing that his



interference only excited fresh tumult, and conceiving the earthquake had turned the heads of his subjects, slowly walked away with rage in his heart, and astonishment in his mind. "I will soon set this matter to rights," said he to himself as he bent his steps towards his own palace, "if the people will revile their Shah and refuse his help when he offers it, they must stand by the consequences, and that wretch of a Daroga too! his father must be sent to burn; of that there is no doubt."

Upon this, entering the private gate of his palace, he was making his way to the interior courts, when he was suddenly stopped by the door-keeper, who exclaimed, "dog's father, and mother's whelp, whither go ye? are you for making a kennel of a king's palace?"

"As Allah is great," exclaimed Mobarek, "there must be some devilry in this." Then turning to the door-keeper, he said with emphasis and deliberation, "now, little man, as you love your soul, look me well in the face and tell me who am I?"

"Who are you?" said the door-keeper, "what words are these? am I, the Shah's

door-keeper, to be called upon by every son of a burnt father to tell him, who are the unclean parents that begat him? What care I who they are? But," said he, looking at him straight in the face, "for this once I will tell you, that you are an ugly dog, a dog that eats much dirt, and a dog that will get kicked out if he walks two steps further."

"Mashallah!" exclaimed the King with a smile, "I can't be worse off than this, I am kicked out of my own house at my own door, and by my own servant! Satan has entered Cashgar with the earthquake, and all my subjects are running mad as fast as they can! I'll address you once more," said the Shah to the door-keeper, "and should you then not hearken unto my words, may Allah have mercy upon you, for I will not. Tell me, madman, do you know your King when you see him?"

"Madman yourself," said the officer; "do I know him? did he not enter this gate an hour ago, and is he not now within the harem—what words are these?"

"Now I know that you must have lost your wits or your eye sight," said Mobarek, "for who is your King but I?"

"See, see," said the door-keeper, pointing his finger in derision, "here is a dog without a saint, who calls himself King—here, children!" he cried with a loud voice to some attendant ferashes, "here bring sticks and turn this fellow out. Let us not strike his head off, for our master and lord the King is a forgiving monarch, and will not see men hurt; but let us teach him that beards are not to be laughed at in Cashgar, and that there is beating to be had here, as well as in other places which acknowledge the true faith."

Upon this there was a charge made by the ferashes, headed by the door-keeper against the unfortunate Mobarek, who seeing himself attacked, thought it prudent to retreat, in order that he might have leisure to reflect what line of conduct to pursue in this posture of his affairs. Upon consideration he came to the conclusion either that the evil eye had struck the whole of the inhabitants of Cashgar at one and the same time, when the city was visited by the earthquake, or that he himself was under the influence of sorcery. All those who had seen him, and who ought to have known his person, rejected him as one totally unknown; he

was, therefore, anxious to ascertain how the change could have been produced.

Perambulating the street, he met a reverend man, a priest, one whom he supposed would not deceive a stranger, and him he accosted. "Peace attend you, Sir priest," said Mobarek, "as you cherish your beard and reflect on the years gone bye of which it is the representative, I conjure you to look into my face and tell me what sort of a face it is, and if you will be so kind, make me out a catalogue of all my features."

The priest was not a little astonished by this address, but extraordinary events having lately taken place in Cashgar, he thought he might as well add this one to the list. "Upon my head be it," said he, "whatever may be your motive, I am not a man to cheat you out of your humour. Therefore, in the first place, I must tell you that your nose is short and crusty."

"How is that?" said Mobarek, with a start, "it was always aquiline and handsome."

"Then your eyes are small and green."

"They were always large and black before!" exclaimed the King.

“Your forehead is low, your cheeks high, your chin long, and in one word you are so ugly, that dogs have the advantage of you.”

“O wonder, wonder!” exclaimed Mobarek, “here am I, who have always been compared to the moon, and even surpassed the sun in beauty, become less than a dog! Here has been sorcery at work, and I am its victim! Thank you, sir,” he said to the priest, “for the trouble I have occasioned, but, perhaps, you will be able to tell me where the best magician lives in Cashgar, in order that I may go seek his advice on this distressing occasion.

“I only know of one,” said the priest, “and he is a barber, who lives hard by; he has some reputation as a magician, much as an astrologer, and more as a barber.” Upon which, describing the house in which this man was to be found, the reverend man pursued his road.

Mobarek without delay bent his steps towards the barber's house, who by a strange coincidence happened to be the very same person who had been visited by Chacal on that very same morning. Having found the shop with

ease, for it was well known in the neighbourhood, without hesitation he walked in! "Peace be with you," said Mobarek, eyeing the barber with much interest.

"Peace return to you," answered the other as he gazed upon the face of his customer, and recognising at once the same features he had seen at the beginning of the day. "Mashallah! Heaven be praised—heaven be praised!" he repeated various times, in accents of most profound respect. "The stars have been kind to your humblest of slaves. This has been a great day, an auspicious day! We have not lived for nothing. When an unworthy hand touches the head of a King, it ennobles the whole body. How can your less than the least sufficiently kiss the prints of your imperial slippers, for twice thus honouring his most abject of thresholds!"

"What words are these?" said Mobarek; "have you seen me before? have the stars anything to do with my comings and goings? Can you say who I am?"

"Is your humble slave then so miserable," said the barber, "that the asylum of the

world should so soon have forgotten the events of the morning? Perhaps your Majesty may wish to remain unknown in this second disguise, if so, let the imperial heart forgive the too excessive exultation of his slave, at such unlooked for distinction."

"We understand not your words," said Mobarek, "if you know who I am, tell me so at once, for I very much want to know myself—tell me, who am I?"

"Who?" said the barber with ecstasy, "who? as Allah is in heaven, who but our Shah, our lord and master, our shadow of Allah upon earth, our centre of the universe, our asylum of the world, in short our descendant of Jem and Jah!"

And suiting the action to the word, the devoted barber bowed himself to the ground, and seizing the skirts of Mobarek's cloak, straightway carried it with eagerness to his lips.

"Thanks be to God," said the enraptured Mobarek raising the palms of his hands to the sky, "thanks and praise, that I really am what I have been, and that I am not somebody else—that I have found one who

knows me, and that it is not I who am mad but my subjects."

Then turning to Teeztrash, (for that was his name) he said :

" Oh happy and well constituted barber ! you have uttered words which I have been longing to hear : you have acknowledged what has been this day denied—you have spoken the truth, and raised your Shah from the depths of disgrace and infamy to his lawful throne. I am the King—I was born a King of the line of Jenghiz—and so, as I hope to live, so let me die. But there have been fatal agencies at work in this my city of Cashgar, and to the earthquake has succeeded a blindness or an obstinate obliquity of vision in some of my subjects, which has driven me to and fro, and hearing of you as one learned in the actions of the stars and in supernatural events, I have come to enquire whence do such events proceed, and how we may restore our subjects to their right senses."

" Great words are these that you have spoken, oh King," said the barber in astonish-



ment and trepidation, for in truth there was something in the appearance of the personage who now stood before him, that did not answer to the man who had visited him in the morning—the voice was different—the manner was different—still the face was the same.

“Great words are these!” said he; “this world is a strange world and daily producing new miracles, though no one sees how they are performed. There are agencies of which we poor blind mortals know nothing. Changes are constantly taking place, though we cannot perceive them; in some immediate, in others slow and imperceptible. See, hair changes from black to white in an hour, aye in a minute, how is this? then wherefore should faces not change also? Behold the fat men of the world, how they replete and deplete—behold the thin, how they first run to skin and then to bone—remark the beards and skulls of humanity—they undergo continual alteration. I shave a head one day and make it as white and smooth as Al-bors, it comes back to me in a week, black and rugged as the pine forest of Thibet. And

let not your slave speak without proof and with presumption, for see that sacred head of your Majesty which I this morning shaved, will ere to-morrow's eve be covered with a fresh tint and again be ready for my razor."

"How is this?" said Mobarek, "you shaved my head this morning! perhaps, you too have been touched by the earthquake!"

"As I live, and as these eyes now view the blessed person of the King of Kings, I swear," said the barber, "that I shaved you this morning."

"Behold," said the Shah, taking off his cap "see and acknowledge your own lie, this head has not been shaved these three days, I was about submitting to the razor in the bath, when the concussion prevented me."

"Allah! Allah! there is but one Allah!" exclaimed Teeztrash, as he inspected Mobarek's head, which was black with a three days growth of hair. "When will miracles cease? sense has dropped from my brain and I have emptied my heart through fear—this is a change! this is more than I ever expected notwithstand-

ing what I have just said—but stay!” exclaimed the barber with a still louder burst of surprise, inspecting Mobarek’s right ear, “this very morning, and here I swear upon the beard of the blessed prophet,” taking the ear into his hand, “this auspicious ear was slit and now it is whole. Speak, oh Shah, how is this?”

“There must be sorcery here,” said Mobarek in deep thought, “bring me a mirror, as I live there must be sorcery here.”

The barber immediately producing his mirror presented it to the King, who straightway took it in hand, and no sooner had he inspected his face, than he made an exclamation of horror and almost fainted away.

“*Amán! Amán!* pity! oh pity!” he exclaimed, “I am dying—I am dead—I am not myself—I am somebody else. My kingdom is gone with my face, and an usurper has stolen both.”

Upon hearing these words, and seeing the state into which the unfortunate Mobarek was thrown, the barber approached, and using words of consolation, entreated him

to calm himself, and regain possession of his mind by taking a cool retrospect of the past.

After Mobarek had remained silent for some time, and feeling strong enough to take another survey of his face, he raised the mirror and gazed at himself with mute horror.

"This horrid face is not new to me," said he in deep cogitation, "I have seen it before, and that not long since."

He thought and pondered for awhile, when suddenly struck by conviction he exclaimed:

"I have found it, I have it. The face is the face of a stranger who came into the bath when I was reposing—I eyed him between awake and asleep, and I recollect shutting quick my eyes to prevent them from resting upon so disagreeable an object. I see it all—whoever he be, he has stolen my face, of that there is no doubt. That man must be a magician."

"Have patience," said Teeztrash; "let us slowly ponder over things—whose clothes are those which now you wear?"

“What do I know?” said Mobarek, “after the earthquake, in the scramble finding that mine were gone, I helped myself to the first that I could find.”

“What was the nature and quality of those you lost?” said the barber.

“I was disguised in the dress of a merchant,” said the King, “I wore a vest, crossed over the breast, a white sash, a dark coloured cloak and a common black cap.”

“By my soul and by your death,” said the barber, “those were the very clothes of the man I shaved this morning. Had you anything about your person,” enquired the barber.

“Yes,” said the Shah, “my purse, and I believe my seals in my secret pocket—no, no, now I recollect,” added he, “I wore them in my cap for better security, for the caba had no side pocket.”

“Then as Allah is great,” said the barber, “you have been acted upon by a sorcerer, he must be famous, and much to be dreaded, for he evidently possesses the awful and fearful secret of the *Terkrooi Bazi*. Let the Shah,

for such you are 'tis plain, let him reflect on what has taken place, and then exercise his reason and judgment upon the best course to pursue. This morning your slave was accosted by a man with a face such as you now possess, dressed in the manner you have described, who having taken off his cap, deposited it in yonder corner, and then sat down to have his head shaved. Fate so ordained that a journeyman cap-maker who had been operated upon, took a seat near the cap. He recognised it as one which his own hands had fashioned only the day before, and knowing it to belong to the Shah, immediately concluded that he who was then under my hands must be His Majesty in disguise. His suspicion was confirmed when he found two royal seals contained within the lining, and forthwith he communicated the intelligence to others, and finally to me. We were satisfied that my customer was the Shah, because although he at first denied the fact, yet as soon as he saw the seals, his whole manner acquired a new tone, and seizing upon them with avidity, he im-

mediately quitted the shop, leaving us convinced of the truth of our discovery."

When the barber had ceased speaking, Mobarek casting himself down in apparent despair, said, "What is now to be done? An usurper has possessed himself of my throne by magic, and by magic he must be dispossessed." Then turning towards the barber, he said, "tell me, O man, what is to be done! Can your art divine where that secret is to be acquired, which having caused me to be deposed from my kingdom, will enable me to regain possession of it?"

Teeztrash with all humility bowed himself before Mobarek, for he felt perfect conviction that he was the Shah, and after some thought, said, "Man is not placed in this world, be he King, or be he subject to eat the bread of unmixed prosperity—that is reserved for hereafter—reverses are his trials, and by his conduct under such trials will he be judged. 'Tis plain, O King, that Allah has designed you for future beatitude, since he has ordained this mode of trying your faith. 'Tis your duty to regain your kingdom, and

you will have to undergo every sort of trouble, fatigue, and privation in the attempt, and Inshallah! you will succeed at last, for fraud so palpable as this will sooner or later be detected."

Mobarek, horrified at wearing a face not his own, and impatient for a magician as ever sick man felt for a doctor, was relieved when the barber had delivered himself of his moral effusion, and then with great earnestness enquired again, "What is to be done? Whither can I go? What can I do to get rid of this awful disaster? Are there not wise men enough in Cashgar to overcome a rascal?"

"In a far distant country, O King!" said Teeztrash, "on the borders of a great lake, in the dominions of the great Blooddrinker, where sects of all denomination, infidels, jews, worshippers of images, and all abominations are allowed to herd and congregate, exists a small community of *Shaitan perests* or worshippers of Satan. The sons of this abominable race are magicians, sorcerers, necromancers—they believe in every species of



witchcraft, and practice numerous wicked incantations—they subsist by making philters, charms, spells, and talismans, and then spread themselves over the world to poison the minds of the credulous, and deceive the ignorant and unwary. Should one of those wretches have travelled hitherwards, we must put our trust in Allah, and as he, it seems, possesses power sufficient to dispossess our King of his throne, it is plain, that for wise purposes the Shaitan has been allowed to reign triumphant for a while, and will only be expelled when the people of Cashgar being convinced of their impurities and abominations, shall reform, and becoming wise and virtuous, will make their city too disagreeable a place of residence for him. As for you, O King," continued Teeztrash, "your slave only sees one course to pursue, which is to bow your head unto the dust before the decrees of Allah, and in token of your resignation to make a vow and a pilgrimage."

"How?" said Mobarek, "are you a priest and a man of God that should ordain vows and recommend pilgrimages?"

“Your slave is less than the least,” said the barber; “he has read books, has studied his modicum of astrology, and has conversed with wise men who know things. There is nothing like a vow when the mind is in distress, and no act more wholesome both for soul and body than a pilgrimage. The one secures an object of hope, and the other whilst it keeps that hope alive, also allays irritation of body and mind, giving to both something to do. Despise not wisdom because it comes from a barber. Water is still water, though it springs from mud and slime.”

The dejected Mobarek heard the words of Teeztrash with feelings similar to those of one who hears his death warrant pronounced. The pilgrimage which he was advised to undertake was to the tomb of Nouh al Nebi, the first and elder of all the prophets, which was said to exist at the foot of the mountains of Ararat, in the neighbourhood of which was situated the country of the *Shaitan perests* or devil worshippers. Thus uniting a religious motive to an act of necessity, the barber insisted that success would not fail to crown his

enterprize, and he dwelt the more upon this, because viewing the question in every possible light, he did not see how the difficulty could be otherwise encountered. The face is that which distinguishes one man from another; no other part of the body possesses expression; the voice, the colour of the hair, and the complexion may change, but no features were ever so much altered as to make one face pass for another! In vain might it be proclaimed from every house top in Cashgar, that a sorcerer had stolen the King's face, adopting its sacred features for his own, no one would believe such a thing possible, although those who like the barber, were conversant in magic, and had witnessed the progress of this particular transaction might be convinced of the truth. That there was a remedy to the evil was certain, for what had been done once may be done a second time, in accordance to that saying of a famous Tartar sage, that "one good *turn* deserves another."

Mobarek, however, was slow in adopting the barber's scheme, for one predominant feeling existed in his heart which paralyzed

his energies, and rendered him a prey to the greatest infirmity of purpose. That feeling was his love for the Princess Khoshboo. Accustomed as he was to the enjoyment of her society, his existence being united to hers, the prospect of a separation, perhaps for ever, distracted his heart with grief. But now impelled by a stronger feeling than the loss of her society, he felt that under cover of his face, the base usurper of his throne might also usurp her affections, and this thought rendered him so miserable, that he was determined, ere he decided what course finally to pursue, to make an attempt to see and undeceive her. Accordingly, being well acquainted with all the avenues and secret entrances of his own palace, as well as with her habits of life, he proposed a scheme by which he hoped to see her alone, at a moment when he knew she might be seated in her room of retirement. Having passed the night at the barber's house, (who exerted himself to the utmost to entertain his royal guest with proper distinction,) the next morning,

before the dawn, he glided into the garden of the harem, through a secret door, and disguised in a woman's veil, contrived to pass unnoticed into the very apartment inhabited by the lady of his affections, and secreted himself in one of the adjacent closets, where we must, for the present, leave him.

When the Princess Khoshboo heard that the slave Badboo had been preferred before her, and called to the presence of the Shah, she retired to her apartment dissolved in tears and a prey to grief and mortification. In vain she recalled to her mind every word that had passed in her last interview with her beloved Mobarek, fearful lest she might have expressed herself in a manner to give offence, she could recollect nothing that could have produced this apparent change in his sentiments. It was as strange as it was grievous. She could not bring herself to believe that one so full of feeling, so tender, so just, as Mobarek should, without any reason, have discarded her, to attach himself to a coarse, uneducated slave. His tastes had been her

tastes, his affections were her affections. They had lived to each other, and although he was the best of masters to those who immediately surrounded his person, as he was the most just of monarchs to his subjects at large, yet how he could associate with those whose tastes were not as refined as his own, and who enjoyed no feeling in common, were circumstances totally inexplicable!

The people of Cashgar were more or less given to superstition, believing in the power of magic, and Khoshboo among the rest was not incredulous; yet although the whole city were willing to believe that the earthquake had been caused by a stroke of that destiny from which no Mussulman can ever be free, still so infatuated was she in her love for her beloved Mobarek that she would not allow herself to give him up, until she had again seen and heard from his own lips that she was no longer dear to him.

As the day closed in, she found her position becoming more and more irksome, for her slaves who loved her tenderly had so espoused her

cause that they did not cease conveying to her every report that was current in the seraglio of the renewed delinquencies and atrocities of their royal master. In rushed one open-mouthed, saying, "As you love your soul, O my Khanum, I swear, that he insists upon more wine. He drinks much wine."

A short time after another ran in exclaiming, "He is calling the Sheik-el-islam a burnt father, and the Mufti a dog without a blessing! Such horrid words he utters, that we are putting our trust in the prophet."

Soon after, more women came with the news that he had given Badboo a slap in the face, and had desired her to go to a disagreeable place. The sum of the whole evening's proceedings amounted to this, that he was left very red in the face, his cap on one side, calling the chief eunuch the father of a donkey, and asserting with constant oaths and protestations that he was a King, and nothing but a King!

The unfortunate Khoshboo was in utter despair at all she heard, and began seriously to consider what such marvels could possibly

mean; she passed the night in a state of sleepless trepidation, giving herself up to unceasing conjecture and to unchecked grief.

“I will see him to-morrow,” she exclaimed to herself, “happen what may, I will force myself into his presence, and ascertain in person from whence can proceed so great, so extravagant a change in his whole conduct. Should he persist in treating me after this manner, as I live, I will leave him and take to the deserts and mountains, and there seek repose either in utter seclusion or in death.”

Having dismissed her attendants, she endeavoured to repose her harassed mind by sleep, but in vain—hour succeeded hour without closing her eyes, until at length the day began to dawn—she arose, and exerting her strength, lifted up the heavy sash that closed the window of her room, and endeavoured to withdraw the exterior curtain, in order to breathe the fresh air of the morning. In so doing, she made a noise, which became a signal for Mobarek who had already taken post in a secret closet to be in readiness.

He knew that the noise proceeded from the



room in which Khoshboo usually slept, he therefore stepped forwards and putting his eye to the crevice formed by the hinges of the door, he there beheld his beloved, seated in a melancholy attitude, her head resting on her hand, with her eyes turning towards heaven, as if in mental prayer. His heart palpitated at this sight, for it was then that he felt the cruelty of possessing a face not his own, and that, the most hideous of its kind. However, he determined, before he showed himself, to try what the sound of his voice, which was unchanged, might produce in his favour, and he, therefore, said in a low accent,

“Khoshboo! my soul Khoshboo!”

At these words, which fell upon the ears of the disconsolate princess, like the morning dew upon an opening flower, Khoshboo started—her colour left her cheek—she listened again and said,

“Mobarek, my lord, is that your voice?”

“Yes, it is me, my princess,” he replied, “my soul is thirsty for want of thy charms.”

Hearing this, she quickly arose from her seat, and with one bound, her heart the while

beating violently, and her eyes flashing joy, she flew to the door, and raising the latch pulled it open. Mobarek meanwhile had turned his back to her, fearing, lest the view of his face might defeat his hopes, and said,

“Khoshboo, my love, you must be prepared for a horror—your lover and your husband is a victim to sorcery, and you will no longer recognise him—he is still, however, your own faithful prince in heart, though he be changed in features.”

During these words, Khoshboo had seized Mobarek's hand, clasped his knees, scarcely heeding the tenour of his speech, and was striving to obtain a more tender embrace, when as he turned his face towards her, she caught a view of it—words cannot describe the revulsion that took place in her breast at the sight—she started back, uttered several screams so loud and piercing that they rung throughout all parts of the harem, and then she fell into a swoon.

The sounds of her voice were heard by her women, as well as by some of the eunuchs who were beginning to rise, and immediately a

rush was made to her apartment—woman followed woman, and eunuch succeeded eunuch, when pushing their way into the room, it may be imagined what was their surprise, to find the gem and favourite of the harem apparently lifeless, before a stranger, and that stranger a ruffian. They all fell of course upon the intruder before they thought of the sufferer, for vengeance always takes precedence of pity, and having seized, bound, and dragged him away, they then endeavoured to restore the unfortunate princess to life, an operation of great difficulty, and which having been attended with success, was succeeded by a long fit of illness, with strong symptoms of mental derangement.

The imposter having passed the first evening of his reign in eating and drinking such things as he had never eaten and drank before, finished the day, as may have been gathered from what has been said, by an unquestionable fit of intoxication. The harem, the palace, even the city, were thrown into a state of surprise, and had it not been for the earthquake, people would have concluded that the Shah had run clean out

of his senses. But as we have before observed, that event had prepared men's minds to believe in a supernatural agency, and consequently they concluded that that same agency was acting upon the temper, habits and conduct of the sovereign.

The grand vizier and other dignitaries were anxious to observe how he would comport himself at the next great *selam* or court, which was daily held before the noon-day prayers, because the temper and humour of the Shah being always a matter of considerable public importance, they wished to ascertain whether they might hope for a continuance of the peace and good government which they had hitherto enjoyed, or whether they were to look for a change, perhaps, to be ground under a tyranny or made to groan under the horrors of caprice and uncertainty.

Chacal having shaken off the fumes of his potations, awoke to a sense of the difficulties of his situation. Aware that he was to appear in public, before the court, and the assembled dignitaries, and, moreover, that he would have to undergo various ceremonies,

both in etiquette and forms of speech, of which he was utterly ignorant, he felt loath to exhibit himself. However, being a man of quick apprehension, although coarse and sensual in appetite and habits, he determined to trust in his good destiny, and conform himself to what the chapter of accidents might open to his understanding. When the hour was come, having been duly dressed in gorgeous brocade, and the richest shawls, his arms loaded with armlets and a glittering crown of jewels on his head, he proceeded to walk in state from the apartments of the harem, to take the seat prepared for him, in the great hall of audience. All the women were on foot to see him pass, for so great had been the curiosity excited by his recent conduct, that they flocked to ascertain whether he really was the King Mobarek who reigned over them, or another.

Leaving the gate of the harem, and entering upon the more public avenues, the heralds announced his arrival by the usual loud cries, the signal for the viziers, the secretaries of state, the law officers, the men of the sword,

and all other dignitaries to take their places, according to rank, and there to await in humble expectation, and in attitudes of respect, until the monarch should appear. After the proper delay had elapsed, and the necessary quantum of awe had been excited, the wary, though apprehensive Chacal at length made his appearance. He implicitly followed the lord master of ceremonies, who preceding him, at length conducted him straight to the throne, upon which he took his seat, though with so much awkwardness of manner, accompanied by attitudes and forms so uncouth and ungraceful, that every one could not refrain remarking how much their young and elastic Shah had suddenly altered. Mobarek who united agility with grace in every step, who universally charmed the world by the amiability of his demeanour, and the benevolence of his looks, was, indeed, but ill-represented by the coarse and heavy Chacal, who although he wore a face not to be mistaken, still could not fail exciting a suspicion that all was not as it was wont to be. Having seated himself, the counterfeit King

looked abashed and out of countenance, for he no more knew what to do, or say than an idiot. There he sat looking at his court and his courtiers, whilst they in return gazed at him. Instead of immediately addressing the appointed court flatterer and maker of speeches, according to established etiquette, and receiving an answer which would tell him that he was the star of the universe, by which the rest of the world guided their actions, Chacal uttered not a word. He would have given his beard had any one of the many automatons who stood before him, said something or anything—he would even have received abuse with pleasure, and been thankful for imprecations. But it was as much as their heads were worth to utter a word out of the usual routine, and, therefore, all were silent.

At length by good fortune a great stir took place at the furthest end of the court, and to the surprise of all, to their utter amazement and even fear, the voice of their King was heard to issue, not from the throne, but in loud accents of wrath and complaint, whence the aforesaid stir and noise were heard to proceed.

“What has happened?” at length was uttered from the throne in a voice new to the ears of the assembled court, words spoken by Chacal, and which were immediately answered by the person appointed to speak to the King in public.

The stir was produced by the arrival of the eunuchs and executioner’s officers, who having seized upon Mobarek in the apartment of the wretched Khoshboo, were now dragging him forward to receive judgment from the mouth of the King himself, for the dire offence which he had committed.

During this act of violence, the following words were heard ever and anon vociferated in the voice of Mobarek :

“Dogs and villains stop—whither are you taking me? Am I not your King—do not you recognise my voice?”

Then after much struggling, being dragged into the very presence of Chacal, he exclaimed pointing to the impostor.

“That wretch is a sorcerer, an usurper—he sits on my throne.”

Then calling to his grand vizier by name, he said,



“ Will you allow this, oh man ! I who am your true King, I order you to seize and slay the villain.”

Chacal, who now perceived how matters stood, recognising his own face in that of Mobarek, and who began really to fear that he might be in danger, exercised his voice without disguise, and exclaimed :

“ What madman is this ? wherefore is he brought here—after all am I not the King ? ”

“ Dog and villain,” again exclaimed Mobarek, “ you are a *Shaitan*—a black necromancer—you have usurped my throne as well as my face.”

The whole scene was one of stirring moment. Every one present was in a state of alarm. The conflicting parties were eyed with awe and suspicion—no one knew what to believe. The voice of Mobarek was there, but issuing from a face that inspired disgust, whilst his own face was on the throne, but speaking in a manner and with a tone that created apprehension.

Chacal would willingly have ordered the executioners to end the dispute by commanding the instant decapitation of his rival, but he

feared had he done so, to endanger his own existence. He apprehended, should he order Mobarek's death, that the magic which he had exercised would cease, and his own face returning to him, would leave him at the mercy of the people at Cashgar, whose anger and indignation would not fail to be excited; therefore, with great presence of mind he again lifted up his voice, and said,

"Stop that madman's voice—strike him on the mouth should he speak again. Now say, oh man," addressing the chief eunuch, "what is his crime, and wherefore is he brought hither?"

"As I am your sacrifice," said the guardian of the women, "this man was found in the apartments of the harem, which is a crime worthy of death, and your slave has brought him before the asylum of the world to receive sentence from his Majesty's sacred lips; here is the executioner ready at hand."

In fact, an executioner with one hand on his sword was already prepared to sever the head of the unfortunate Mobarek, for a crime

so perpetrated had ever been followed by death without reprieve, since Cashgar had been kingdom.

“Put up your sword, oh little man,” exclaimed Chacal, “the wretch is a madman, that is plain, sense has left his brain and he is stranger to wisdom; let him live, he knows no better—go, turn him out of the city—give him money and give him food, let him depart and Allah go with him.”

At this extraordinary act of lenity, the court was thrown into utter surprise. All hearts were turned in favour of the counterfeit Shah, who, thus taunted, thus abused, his sanctuary invaded and his women insulted, could with readiness forgive—act with mercy and even dismiss his enemy with life, whilst, at the same time, he conferred a benefit.

The unfortunate Mobarek was immediately conducted forth from the presence in a state of hopeless misery and bewilderment, whilst the court flatterer having a theme to expatiate upon, exhausted his wit to laud and magnify the supposed monarch to the very summit of

the seventh heaven, apostrophizing him as the most benign, the most forgiving and generous father of his people that had ever sat upon a despotic throne.

Mobarek seeing that destiny had decided against him, and that his case was desperate, brought to mind the words of Teeztrash, the barber, and bowing his head to the decrees of Allah, allowed himself, without more ado, to be taken to the gate of his own city and thence to be thrust out with contumely, to seek his fortunes in the wide world.

“The barber spoke the truth,” said he with a sigh, “when he asserted that man is not born to enjoy unmixed prosperity, God is great—God is merciful! faith cannot be truly exercised unless it be tried—let me bless the misfortune which gives me an opportunity of exhibiting my belief.”

Then reflecting further, he said,

“I will pursue the path which the sagacious Teeztrash has pointed out—I will make a vow—I will undertake the pilgrimage he prescribed.”

Upon which uttering aloud his profession of faith, and saying, “*Al-Fatihah*,” that prayer

which gives courage and consolation to all true believers, he stepped forward with resolution, never once looking back, lest the recollections of all that he left behind him in his native city should disarm his heart of its resolves and unman his reason.

He would still have lingered on in the hope of one parting interview with his beloved Khoshboo, and would also have once more sought the advice of his now only friend the barber, but he felt that such a step was impossible, seeing that the gates of the city were barred against him; therefore crushing all such thought, he pushed forward with vigour and pursued his journey towards Samarcand.

Turning aside from the road he came to a village, intending to seek repose for the night, but he little knew the disadvantages of possessing a bad countenance. Upon entering the gate, he was met by a serious looking villager who eyeing him well from head to foot, exclaimed :

“ Allah have mercy !”

And blowing over each shoulder, fled, and retreated into the heart of the village,

Mobarek, at this ominous overture, paused and considered what could be the meaning of so strange a reception, but in truth he had not long to wait for an explanation, for soon the whole population appeared in a mass, making gestures full of offensive import, accompanied by yells and cries of "Go—Satan be with you, go—Heaven send thee misfortunes, but go—may your eyes be blind, go—curses fall on your house, go."

Upon which Mobarek standing up in self-defence, exclaimed, "What have I done? Am I not a stranger? Am I not a Mussulman?"

"What have you done?" was retorted to him. "What have you not done? Have you not struck us all with the evil eye—Satan that thou art! Has our corn not been blighted? Do asses, and he and she goats die for nothing, and go walking about sick, and without a countenance, for no visible cause? Have our children been dying of the small-pox for nothing? Have the walls of the house you slept in fallen down without a cause? Go—you are a misfortune. We are not men to speak and not to act."

"But as Allah is my witness," said Mobarek, "I never was here before. I am a man of Cashgar, and never travelled thus far."

"Father of lies, and great grandfather of deceit!" was roared out by an hundred voices; "have we not eyes, and shall we forget our miseries, because a liar chooses to deny them? Here, look at this maiden who once was beautiful, fresh, happy, see her now. Gone by—a wreck, without a face without hope, did not your eye spoil her? See this old woman, once fat and merry what is she now but a skin full of old bones? Are not our women, our kine, our mares, our she camels and she asses all turned barren? Does a tree bear fruit? Does the fountain flow? Do the clouds rain as they did? Can you deny having been here? Go, go"—again was vociferated by an hundred voices, until the unfortunate Mobarek, seeing that all supplication was useless, turned upon his heel and retraced his steps to the high road, shaking the hem of his garment as he walked away, exclaiming, "Allah have mercy

upon you! infatuated creatures! none of the dust of your unsainted village shall rest upon my garments."

It was then, more than ever, that he felt the infliction of wearing the face he did, for what could be clearer than that the ruthless Chacal had visited the village and left some token of his satanic art among its inhabitants. "Allah!" he exclaimed, "poor people! how ready are they to attribute misfortune or disappointment to human intervention rather than to the true cause—all being in a state of probation, as well as myself. The spoiler, although he at present may possess my throne, will also have to endure his trials!"

As he walked on improving the state of his mind by meditation, his heart overflowing with gratitude that he possessed so inestimable a gift, as docility under castigation, and a readiness of belief on matters of high import, he came unawares upon a large caravan which had taken up its position for the night under a grove of trees by the road-side. This occurrence he felt, indeed providential, for he had fully made up his mind to pass the night



unprotected and unrefreshed in the wilds of the open desert. He proceeded to where a tent had been erected, and addressing himself to one, who by the benignity of his countenance, and the respectability of his appearance inspired him with confidence—begged protection for the night, and permission to proceed with the caravan on the following day. For this once, he had fallen into good hands, for the person to whom he addressed himself was one of a company of merchants travelling to Samarcand and Bokhara accompanying their goods for sale. Though the merchant did not approve of Mobarek's looks, still, touched by his voice, and the humility of his manner, and acting upon the obligations of hospitality acknowledged by every good Mussulman, he called him into the tent, invited him to the evening meal, and administered words of comfort to his drooping spirits. Mobarek said little, but opened well his ears to hear all that might be remarked concerning the state of things at Cashgar, from whence the caravan had but recently departed, and it was not long ere his curiosity was gratified. When the company

had washed their hands after eating, and were beginning to smoke, one of the liveliest of the party, a young dealer in lambskins, exclaimed, "Thanks be to Allah, we have left Cashgar at a fortunate moment, and issued from the city at a proper time. Heaven only knows what may be its fate, if matters proceed as they are now going on. 'Tis grievous to sit under a burning sun, when one has been accustomed to repose in the shade."

"In truth, yes," said a more demure merchant, "if the Shah has only been struck by the evil eye, as it is generally asserted, then with proper remedies matters may come round, and he may become the same good monarch he ever was, but should he be the prey of some unsainted enemy of God, and converted from the rectitude of his ways by sorcery or magic, then we must put our trust in Allah. Such things pass man's comprehension."

"It is said," remarked a man of easy credulity, "that the palace at Cashgar begins to be infected with the odour of a goat, and that sounds of falling stones are often heard during

the night.\* Strange things are asserted—Heaven knows how true or false they may be, but most certain it is, that matters have greatly changed since the earthquake.”

“*Aman, aman!* pity, pity,” exclaimed a devout man blowing over each shoulder, and shaking the hem of his garment at the same time. “The world is not all as it appears to our eyes. There is a certain curtain interposed before the eye of sense which will be withdrawn by death, and not before. Whatever may really be the case, this is sure, that matters have strangely altered at Cashgar within a short time, and that our King is not the same he was before the catastrophe.”

Some one then said, “It is rumoured that the Princess Khoshboo is so entirely disgusted at the present conduct of the King towards her, that she is determined to leave the court, and retreat to that of her brother the King Kamram.”

\* Mahomedan doctors assert that the scape goat, which was sent into the desert for the expiation of the sins of the Jews, was Eblis or Satan. Satan is also called Shaitan Abragim, or the devil stoned, or driven away by stoning, to put every true believer in mind that temptations are to be resisted by force.—Vide D’Herbelot.

At these words, Mobarek pricked up his ears, and ventured to inquire in what direction might be situated the capital city of the King Kamram, and whether it was likely that the caravan would approach it. He was informed that the caravan would proceed precisely in the direction of that city, but that although it would not enter its gates, would halt so near to it, that any one might visit the place with ease.

These were delightful words to the ears of the unfortunate Mobarek, for a new hope immediately sprung up within his breast. He contemplated the possibility of making his deplorable situation known to his brother-in-law, consequently, of procuring through his intervention the power to regain possession of his throne, and once more of being restored to his beloved Khoshboo. He cast about in his mind how to enlist his present companions in his service, and render them subservient to his necessities, but reflecting that he had been rejected by those most interested in recognising him for their lawful sovereign, and how difficult, if not impossible, it would be to make his tale good before entire strangers, he deemed it best to be silent, and to travel on

until he should reach the territory of his brother-in-law, when he would make one great effort to emancipate himself from his present dilemma.

The question he had asked, having however, excited the curiosity of the merchants, one of them inquired whence he came, and whither he was going, to which he answered that he was at present in search of a holy man before whom he proposed to make a vow, and afterwards to follow up that act by performing a pilgrimage to the tomb of the great Nough el Nebi. He then made a profound inclination of the body, exclaiming with great earnestness, "God is great, there is but one God—whatever is, is, and *Inshallah tallah!*" The seriousness of his demeanour, and the appearance of woe which oppressed him, having excited sympathy in the breast of his auditors, he was informed that in the capital of the King Kamram there lived a famous *merdi Khoda* or man of God, before whom he could make his vow, and who would give him instructions upon the best mode of undertaking his pilgrimage, a piece of information which was doubly agreeable to Mobarek, since it afforded

him a hope that he would thereby secure a friend now so needful, and who might be of the greatest service to him. Accordingly, with the good will of the merchants, he continued to travel under their protection until the caravan reached the neighbourhood of the capital city of King Kamram.

Mobarek having reached his destination took an affectionate leave of his benefactors, and proceeded to search out the abode of the promised holy man. He was well known in the city, being one of the chiefs of the law, and, consequently, his house was soon pointed out to the deposed and wandering Shah.

It was a mean looking habitation, situated close to a mosque, where the good man was wont to hold forth to a large congregation of admiring followers. Mobarek entered with confidence, for it is one of the privileges of the good, (or those reputed to be so,) to attract the unfortunate, and he straightway made his way to where the saint was seated, and then stood before him.

He found him an old man, with a face so wan, that death has not a paler aspect, his

under jaw protruded, producing the appearance of a sneer, and, indeed, were it not for his eyes, which were extremely vivid, he might have been taken for the representative of a dead patriarch, or a ghost of ghosts. He was dressed in the coarsest manner, wearing an old sun burnt cloak over his shoulders, whilst a band of black cloth was bound round his temples, which increased the lurid cast of his face in a manner fearful to behold.

Mobarek, who never could entirely forget that he was a King, and who had always been in the habit of receiving rather than giving presents, in approaching the holy man had entirely forgotten the necessary ceremonial of not appearing empty-handed.

Now this was a slight which no man in authority can brook, and there was none who forgave it less than the holy old man. The display he made of poverty, in truth concealed a mine of inward pride, for in proportion he appeared to humble himself, so much the greater were his exactions of respect and submission from others.

Like one of those sacred trees from whom

withered branches the sick hope to gather health and prosperity, so abided the decrepit saint in his wretched mansion in all the dignity of poverty and self-righteousness, ready to communicate his wisdom to all those who approached him with proper marks of deference ; but severe and repugnant to those who were negligent of due respect.

Seeing a man before him of sufficiently ill-favoured aspect, mean in his attire, not bearing a present in his hand, and appearing to exact rather than to bestow respect, the old man casting his quick eye upon him, exclaimed :

“ How is this ? what has happened ? are we something here or not ? ”

“ May it please you, *O merdi Khoda !* ” said Mobarek, “ I am come to lay the case of an unfortunate man before you, who has at present no other hope of relief, excepting what Allah in his mercy may place in your lips. Such as you see me, I am a King ! ”

In the room where the old man presided, a congregation of his followers was seated, and when they heard the words of Mobarek, they



all shouted "Allah! Allah!" in surprise, succeeded by expressions of contempt and derision.

"What words are these?" said the old man turning his keen eye towards Mobarek, "do Kings walk about the world like mad dogs, making it a curse to see them? Has sense left thy brain, or perhaps was it never there? Speak, oh man, wherefore come you to me, for I who am the poorest of the poor, the less than the least, what have I to do with one who calls himself a potentate, a shadow of Allah upon earth?"

"That I am a King is no fault of mine," said Mobarek, "I was born such, and the decrees of God are inscrutable. I have been changed, the face I wear belongs to another. That I am a wanderer and an outcast is also no fault of mine—such is destiny; but yours will be the fault, oh man! if you should refuse to give heed to my words, and hearken to my representation. Wherefore do you enjoy the reputation of wisdom and sanctity, if you reject the supplication of the wretched and necessitous, and wherefore make this show of superior

holiness if you act not accordingly? I tell you that I am a King, dispossessed of my throne by the base act of a sorcerer and a necromancer, and that I require advice what to do and how to act."

"That you are a King," said the old man, "I am not here to deny, if so, receive my congratulations, good luck attend you, and long may you reign."

Upon these words, a burst of derision came from his followers:—he then went on and said:

"But if a King, wherefore come you to me? There is a King in this city, wherefore not seek him? Do you not know the words of the poet?

Kings herd with Kings, and Mufties Mufties bless,  
What dog the great will live with dog the less?"

Mobarek seeing it hopeless to interest the feelings of this perverse old man, turned away in disgust, resolving to defer making his vow until he had seen the King his brother-in-law. His heart failed him when he considered how wretched and hopeless was his situation, and he reflected in sadness, that per-

haps he might produce as little impression upon his relative as upon the old man of God.

The King enjoyed great reputation for sanctity, and was celebrated throughout the country for the strictness with which he upheld the Mohamedan law. He cherished priests, and was always ready to act under their guidance. In his person he exhibited all the exterior of sanctity. His arms were loaded with rich amulets, the '*bismillah*,' was engraved on everything belonging to him, such as his sword, his spear, his drinking cup, his ring and armlets. The dress he wore was one of mortification and penance, never arraying himself in his royal robes excepting upon great occasions.

His palace was everywhere inscribed with holy invocations, sentences of the law were written upon the door posts and met the eye at the summit of every gate. In short, the ear could turn in no direction but it heard words of sacred import, and the eye saw nothing but what reminded its owner of his obligations to receive the faith.

Mobarek seeing all this, felt confidence that

his brother-in-law would not refuse to listen to the petition of an unfortunate man, and recollecting what he had heard from the merchants of the caravan concerning his beloved Khoshboo, his heart beamed with hope, that his miseries would soon be at an end.

“*Ilhemdillah* ! praise be to Allah,” he exclaimed, “I shall be restored to the beloved of my soul, and with the help of the prophet and of my brother, I may regain possession of my throne and revenge myself upon the miscreant who has usurped it.”

He almost blessed the old saint who had refused to hear him, and with these and such like feelings he bent his way to the royal palace to seek an interview with the King. Little, however, was he acquainted with the character of the man he was about to address, and still less with human nature in general.

His brother in-law, in fact, was a man of a weak mind, bigotted, prejudiced, and acting upon impulse, and whose great boast and exultation was, that he owned the King of Cashgar for a brother-in-law. Although but a petty chieftain, commanding over a small district, he gave

himself the airs of royalty, bid much defiance, and in all circumstances of perplexity, invoked the name, friendship and relationship of the King of Cashgar as his principal protection.

The great difficulty to contend with for one so totally unprotected and unknown as Mobarek, wearing the garb of poverty was to approach the person of the King and obtain a hearing. He made several attempts to enter the palace, and to make his voice heard at the daily selam, but was always beaten off, and he probably might have died of hunger in the streets, had not a circumstance occurred which dissipated his fears and gave fresh courage to his hopes. Seated in a corner of the great square before the palace, looking wistfully at the gates, hoping that some lucky dispensation might be awaiting him, he perceived a procession of strangers arrive, who by their appearance he felt assured were from Cashgar. The principal object in this procession was a *Taktaravan* or litter, indicative of a lady of consequence, and observing it narrowly, he was convinced that it must contain his beloved Khoshboo, and that she was now putting into practice that which

had been reported in the caravan by his friends the merchants. He arose from his seat with a bound and ran towards the litter. He was not mistaken for it was the incomparable Khoshboo herself—he could not contain his joy at the sight, and approaching exclaimed:

“Khoshboo, my eyes! my soul! see the misery of your Mobarek—I die—I die.”

All the bystanders deemed him insane, and he was driven away with indignity, but his words sank deep into the very soul of his mistress, who seeing the very person who had frightened her almost to death in her own apartment at Cashgar, became confirmed in the persuasion, that this man was, indeed, her husband, her beloved Mobarek, suffering from the effects of sorcery, and that the sorcerer was no other than the present possessor of the throne of Cashgar.

She entered the palace gates of her brother, the King Kamram in a state of such excessive agitation, that when called upon to alight from her litter, she almost forgot the circumstance of her arrival, and was slow in acknowledging

the marks of respect and attention which were paid to her by her brother's attendants, and by some of the older servants, who had known her as a child.

She was conducted to her apartment, and was informed that the King would not be long before he came to greet his sister, but she scarcely heeded the intelligence, and remained wrapt in a state of abstraction, her mind possessed by the one fact that she had seen her beloved Mobarek, wretched and forlorn, an outcast from the world.

“It was his voice—it was his very manner,” she exclaimed to herself; “nothing could make me mistake it—but, oh what a horrid person;” upon saying which, she placed her two hands before her eyes. “What a face! what a hideous expression of countenance! alas, how different from his own real—his dearly beloved face—when will it ever be restored to him?”

Upon her very first interview with her brother, she determined to describe the whole case, to explain her reasons for leaving the court of Cashgar, to inform him of the present

abject situation of her Mobarek, and entreat his assistance for the purpose of restoring him to his throne and his face.

The King Kamram being taken quite unawares by this sudden apparition of his sister, was astonished and displeased.

“Wherefore,” thought he, “has she left the court of Cashgar, and the protection of the King my brother-in-law? She has done evil.”

And he was the more confirmed in these doubts, when he received a letter from that King, informing him to be on his guard against a certain impostor, who possibly might visit his court, declaring that he was the lawful King of Cashgar, but dethroned and bewitched by a sorcerer.

“There must be something wrong here,” said he, as he proceeded to pay a visit to his sister.

As soon as Khoshboo perceived her brother she ran towards him, and after making a demonstration of the pleasure she enjoyed in seeing him, which he acknowledged but coldly, she exclaimed :

“If you be a man, Kamram, and by the



same blood which flows in our veins, I conjure you to hear my story to the end, and when you have so heard it, to help your sister to encounter the difficulties into which she has been thrown by the decrees of fate."

"We will see," said Kamram without a corresponding emotion, "we too have something to say—speak on."

"First then," said Khoshboo, "it is plain, and a received fact by all, that the whole city and court of Cashgar has been struck with the evil eye, and that the hand of an evil destiny is now pressing hard upon them. I was as happy as a woman could be in the love of the most incomparable husband that was ever decreed to a wife. He adored me as much as I loved him. We lived for each other—I was the envied one of all the harem. The fairest of the fair smote their breasts as they thought upon my superior happiness, and those who were rich in wisdom would willingly have become fools to have enjoyed, for a moment, the distinctions which were heaped upon me, your sister. In one most unfortunate day, the city was convulsed by an earthquake. Mobarek,

upon whom be blessings, had on that morning issued forth to make one of his usual excursions, disguised and unattended, for the purpose of detecting and correcting abuses, but when he returned to his palace, it was plain that he had been overwhelmed by the same misfortune which had struck the city, and he returned a totally new and altered man. He wore the same face, 'tis true—he enjoyed the same beauty of features, the same divine expression of countenance, but everything else was gone ; his harmonious voice was replaced by the speech and tones of a ruffian—his engaging manners had become rude and coarse, and his tastes, from having been as refined as those of an angel, became all at once as sensual and disgusting as those of the lowest camel driver or mountebank. From that moment, I was not only discarded from his presence, and the lowest and vilest of the harem preferred before me, but I was treated with the coarsest indignity ; I was told that I was not fat enough — that my cypress waist was a deformity, that my singing was without effect, and that if I did not drink wine and revel in impropriety, I

might abstain from attendance upon the Shah; I then became as much despised as before I had been courted. Your sister, from being the flower and chief of the harem, was esteemed an incumbrance; and thus degraded, thus despised, I determined to leave the Shah and to take refuge with you my own natural protector. Now, there can be no such sudden effect without a cause—a man cannot lose his intellect without some affection of the brain, and a King who had once been perfection, cannot all at once become the vilest of his race. Every one is now convinced that sorcery has been exercised, that the King has been changed, and it is now ascertained that a certain poor wretch dressed like an inhabitant of the west, ugly, ill-favoured and hideous to behold, who attempted to make his way to the palace and the harem, who asserted in different parts of the city that he was the Shah, who possessed my Mobarek's voice and manners, that he in fact is the victim of sorcery, and that the all-wicked magician had taken his place on the throne.

“These facts are confirmed by assertions made

by a barber of Cashgar, who shaved both the sorcerer and his victim, on that very same day of the earthquake.

“But what has convinced me more than all that the person in question is Mobarek, is the circumstance of his having sought me in my own apartment in the palace in a manner that none but one who was well acquainted with the premises could have done. When he knocked at my door and called upon me by name, I became convinced by his voice, that he was there in person and flew to meet him. I then perceived the hideous stranger, the effect was too great for my feelings and I almost died with the shock, but true it is that the heart and soul of my beloved Mobarek is imbodyed in that vile and degraded form—that there it is to this day, and that he who now occupies the throne of Cashgar, is a miscreant usurper. I must, moreover, inform you, O brother, that I saw that very same unfortunate man, the dethroned King, my own husband, in the crowd as I entered the gates of your palace. He called to me with his own well known voice, he now exists in your very city, and it is to redeem

him from his present state of abject misery, that I call upon you for assistance."

When Khoshboo had ceased to speak, Kamram her brother paused for a while, and looked exceedingly grave.

"These are strange words that you have spoken," said he, "can such things be? Reflect a little. A man for twenty years of his life may prefer lean lamb, then all at once he may like it fat—there is nothing extraordinary in that—a man's voice is known to change in one night—one day it is sweet, the next it is rough. He may admire different things at different times—circumstances make him gross, and circumstances make him refined—there are natural causes for all things, without running to evil eyes and necromancy for what we do not understand. And so, my sister, I think you have been mistaken. You have been slighted by your husband (and what woman is sometimes not slighted?) and you have become angry and impatient, and instead of waiting for the return of your husband's love, you have come to me, who cannot bring it back, do what I will. You have done wrong, sister Khoshboo.

---

My brother, the King of Cashgar is a great King —I will see your wretched man, whom you think to be your husband, bewitched, if so it pleases you, but I must tell you that I already deem him to be an impostor, for I have been informed by my brother the King of Cashgar that such a man will appear before me. You may if you please find him out, and cause him to be brought before me, but as I said before, I make no doubt that he is the impostor, promised to me from Cashgar.”

Khoshboo again repeated what she had asserted, and combated her brother's arguments to the utmost of her power, but all she received in answer was the simple permission to discover Mobarek among the inhabitants of the city, and straightway to cause him to appear before the King. This she soon did. She immediately described the person of her husband to one of the heralds, and orders were given that he should forthwith be taken before the King Kamram.

She was now tormented by many conflicting feelings, for should her brother prove unfavourable to her views, she felt that Mobarek's

situation and her own would be almost hopeless ; she also could not hide from herself that it required all her love for the character and amiable qualities of her husband, to overcome her horror and distaste for his present person. So convinced, however, was she that it was indeed Mobarek who was thus disguised, that she was determined to undergo every privation, and proceed to every extremity, rather than abandon the hope of seeing him restored to his own lawful face.

Mobarek was not long in being discovered, for the man who could have behaved in so public and extravagant a manner on the day of the princess's arrival, could not fail being a marked character. When the herald announced to him, that the King had ordered him to his presence, his heart leaped for joy, for he felt that he had been recognized by his beloved mistress, and that she was the cause of his being so distinguished. He eagerly insisted upon proceeding immediately, and accompanied the herald with exultation and thankfulness.

King Kamram being conscious of his own

weakness of character, never felt safe without an adviser, and as this was a question which required discrimination, he thought he could not do better than to send for one of the heads of the law, and consequently desired that the *merdi khodai*, the man of God, whom we have before described, should attend him. As soon as he appeared, Kamram questioned him narrowly, concerning the powers of necromancy, whilst at the same time he confessed his own doubts, as to the possibility of one man being able to change himself into another.

"May your Majesty's house prosper," said the old man; "by the salt of the King, I swear that though such things are said to be, yet saying is one thing and doing is another. Now in this very city abides a man with a dried up brain, who calls himself by right a King, asserting that owing to the powers of magic, another has exchanged skins with him. He seeks for justice, demanding back his own skin, as if it only required a firman from the Shah, to peel a true believer, and take his face from him."

"You have forestalled wit, and taken the words from my mouth," said Kamram; "praise



be to Allah, we possess men of wisdom, and masters of accomplishment, ready to be our advisers! This very individual is now to appear before us and you, O man who live by wisdom, you will sift his understanding, and ascertain which of his words are wise, and which the contrary."

"By the soul of the Shah," said the old man, "the world is coming to an end when Kings run wild without their faces, seeking for justice. Let us see him first, and then we will speak such words as Allah may put into our mouth."

Upon this Mobarek, who was in attendance, was called in and forthwith stood before King Kamram, and the *merdi khodai*. He adopted the attitude of one who was himself a King, and although meanly dressed and repulsive in countenance, yet his manner and behaviour commanded respect.

"Come forwards," said Kamram, eyeing him from head to foot; "tell us who you are what are your pretensions, and wherefore are you here?"

"Were I to speak in my natural form, I

should tell you, O King, that I am Sovereign of the kingdom of Cashgar, and your brother in-law, and that my true position is on the throne of my ancestors. But destiny has dealt severely with me—Allah in his mercy has sent me misfortunes, and I now appear before you, with another man's face, an outcast, and apparently an imposter. I have already related my deplorable tale to this servant of the prophet now seated before you—he has not believed my words—therefore how can I hope that you, O King, will give them credence, unless some light from heaven more brilliant than that which illumined his brain, shall be vouchsafed to you. One appeal however, I can make which may perhaps produce conviction, and that is, to my wife, your own sister, the princess Khoshboo—let her speak, and she will assert, that my words are not false, and that though in face I am not the King Mobarek, yet in voice, manner, and sentiments, I am unchanged; should you require more proof, she will bid you seek the miscreant who has usurped my throne, who, though he possesses my face, still in voice, manner, senti-

ments and conduct is totally different—I have spoken, what more can I say?"

"This is wonderful," said Kamram, "it is more—it is impossible—what say you, old man," addressing himself to the reputed Saint.

"Your slave's words are these," said the old man. "That there is such a power as magic, no man can doubt, for do we not read of it in books? It is no secret that devils, ghol, jins, and peris exist, beings who entrap men and women, and cause them to sin, producing the thousand strange events for which we cannot account: therefore to assert that there is no such power, would be to set reason at nought. We are apt to call every thing *kismet* and *takdeer*, destiny and fate, when perhaps unseen beings are at work for good or for evil. A man one day is full of vigour and life, see him the following year, he is not to be known, he has been smitten with what we call an evil eye. He becomes withered, sallow and disgusting. May not this be the case with the individual before us? He may tell us that a magician is his enemy, who has ruined his prospects in life, and moreover may assert that the

man who sits on his throne, has also usurped his face. I too may say that old age has usurped my youth—I once was handsome, but now my beauty and freshness are fled, and I am left with the old lean and withered stem of a face, that you now see before you. I might call myself a King, and so I was the king of those who admired and loved me, but like him I am now neglected, and I sigh over my lost features and attractions. My wife too, she affirms that I am altered in person, but still my voice, manners and sentiments are the same. Then what shall we say?—are you, O King, to place yourself at enmity with the powerful Sultan of Cashgar, because an unknown stranger asserts that that potentate is not a true King?—I am the true King, says the intruder—I possess his ugly face; he has got my handsome one;—send an army to accompany me, that I may kill him, and recapture my face. Are you to run the risk of ruining your kingdom, O King, in order to place a proper bit of flesh upon its proper head, when after all it may be the wrong one? Allah forbid! God has not put sense into our brains to make so absurd a use of it—

Let him depart, and Allah go with him. As he has lost his face by magic, so let him regain it;—let him seek the country of the magi; they will inform him how to proceed.—Should what he seek exist on the surface of the globe, and his face be at Cashgar; let him seek it there, and not trouble your presence. I have spoken—what more can your slave say?”

When the old man had done speaking, the King Kamram paused ere he gave his decision as to Mobarek's fate, and having pondered a while at length said, addressing him,

“Our brother of Cashgar has warned us to be upon our guard against an impostor, therefore we are upon our guard—we listen to the advice of the old man of God, and we approve his words. We will not assist you to seek your face—we will not order out our armies and our men of war for such a purpose—therefore in such hope put not your trust—moreover we will not hurt you, but go your way—seek other assistance, and God be with you.”

Mobarek upon hearing these words, proved himself to be a worthy disciple of the proph-

and an inflexible true believer. Although his features exhibited indignation, yet he was resigned to his fate. He straightway would have departed, but recollecting his beloved Khosboo, paused and said,

“King Kamram and brother in law! for such you are, do and say what you will! you have refused me your assistance—so be it—Allah is great—Allah is merciful—man is born to suffer—therefore, why should my fate differ from others? there is only one thing I ask, and I do so as an unfortunate man—you who write God’s name on your door posts, inscribe it on your person, and (let us hope) engrave his image on your heart, you in all consistency must grant me my request. I ask to see my wife the princess Khosboo;—that she is so, there is no doubt—should she discard me, again I say, Allah is great and merciful, so be it, I will not commit the sin of uttering a complaint; but should she acknowledge me, then you cannot forbear your consent. You must allow us to see and to converse. Say not no, for the misery attendant upon such a denial, will be great and grievous.”

Kamram referring this demand to his adviser, the sage passing his hand over his face and beard, turned up his eyes and said,

“*Zarar yok*—there is no harm done, *Olso*—let it be.”

END OF VOL II.

LONDON.

PRINTED BY SCHULZE AND CO. 13, POLAND STREET.

**THE MIRZA.**

—  
**VOL. III.**





# THE MIRZA.

BY

JAMES MORIER, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "HAJJI BABA," "ZOHRAH," "AYESHA," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1841.

LONDON  
PRINTED BY SCHULZE AND CO. 18, POLAND STREET.

## THE MIRZA.

---

HISTORY OF MOBAREK SHAH AND THE  
MAGICIAN, CONTINUED.

THE King Kamram then ordered that his sister the Princess Khoshboo, should be apprized of the presence of Mobarek, and when matters were prepared in the harem, he was allowed to enter, precautions being taken for preserving the necessary decorum—Khoshboo was placed on one side of the door, whilst Mobarek stood on the other, King Kamram and the old priest the meanwhile taking post at a convenient distance. When Mobarek was apprized of the presence of his wife, he exclaimed,

“Khoshboo, my eyes—I am Mobarek your husband—do you acknowledge me?”

"Yes, yes," said Khoshboo, "can you doubt it? whatever happens, your faithful wife will never more separate from you—though you are changed in person, still you are the same in mind and heart—I will be yours till death."

"Be not rash, light of my life," said Mobarek. "Listen to my words, before you take a final resolution. Your brother, the King Kamran rejects my pretensions, and calls me impostor. He desires me to leave his city. I am, as you know, hideous to behold—I have no dwelling place—no home—I am rejected by all—an outcast—poor, and without hope of riches. My first dependance is on Providence, and next in the hope that I may acquire sufficient knowledge in the arts of magic, to destroy the spell under which I am bound, and thus regain possession of my throne. I foresee great hardships—want—fatigue—long and arduous journies. Dearest Khoshboo, reflect upon this before you make your decision—pause ere you call me husband; whichever way you may decide, this I swear, that your Mobarek will ever live in the hope of one day calling you his own again; but he cannot invite

---

you to partake of his miseries ; all he requires is, that you do not abandon the hope of again becoming the partner of his kingdom."

"Hear me, Mobarek," exclaimed Khoshboo, with energy and determination, "you know me little if you look upon me merely as a fair weather wife. I am yours in weal or in woe ; my conviction that you are my own husband, though in disguise, is fixed ; that conviction is inspired by Allah, and nothing shall deter me from following you throughout the world, discarded though you be by my brother, or seeking your fortune in fatigue and in travel. One thing only I entreat of you to grant, which you must allow out of consideration to the weakness of my sex. Exhibit your present face to me as little as you possibly can ; let me rest in the illusion that I am living with the Mobarek whom I first knew, who has ever been the pride of my life, the only man I have ever loved, the only one I ever will love, whom I will always obey, and will ever cherish."

This conversation ceasing, Mobarek turned towards Kamram, and said :

“ You have now heard the determination of your sister, and are acquainted with her feelings. You cannot be cruel enough to separate us—let us depart hence—should fortune favour me you will hear from me again, and then, perhaps, you will regret the part you have taken in this matter.”

Kamram once more turned to the old man and said :

“ Have you heard? can it or can it not be?”

“ Let them go, in the name of Allah and the prophet,” said the sage; “ when a woman is run away with by illusion, she is like a bramble carried across the plain in a whirlwind, nothing can stop her;—let them go, Allah go with them.”

The King Kamram, without more words, allowed his sister to follow the bent of her inclination—for he was embarrassed by her presence, and glad to be rid of her importunities. He insisted only upon one stipulation which was, that they should quit his city and territory in all secrecy, lest the King of Cash

gar should complain that he had acceded to the wishes of one denounced as an impostor.

Khoshboo was ordered to travel, divested of all external show, and adapt herself in everything to the position in which the man she called her husband was placed. The constant wife acceded to this without a murmur; her courage was excited, she was impelled by enthusiasm, combined of love and disdain, and proudly bidding her brother a scornful farewell, she thereby made him understand how utterly she despised the unmanliness of his conduct. She would accept of no benefit from his hands, and appointing a rendez-vous at the city gate with her husband, at the early dawn of the ensuing day, she left the place of her birth without any attendant but him who she felt was her appointed protector by the decrees of destiny.

Here was to be seen a Princess, unrivalled throughout Asia for beauty and accomplishments, humbly mounted on an ass, followed by her husband, a King on foot, with



no protection save the sword by his side and the staff in his hand, both thrown upon the surface of the globe, to seek their fortunes as the speed of Heaven might direct.

Khoshboo was veiled from head to foot as a woman ought to be, whilst Mobarek, who felt how much his wife's happiness depended upon his keeping his own face covered, managed, by ingeniously accommodating the folds of a turban to the obnoxious features, much in the same manner as the Arabs of the desert protect themselves from the ardour of the sun, he screened himself effectually.

They travelled onwards for some time in silence. Mobarek's gratitude for the sacrifice which his beloved wife was making in his behalf, knew no bounds whilst she revolved in her mind how she might best relieve her husband from such like feelings of obligation. When they had travelled so far that the city was no longer in sight, they stopped, and whilst Khoshboo alighted from her ass, Mobarek tended it to a spot where it might graze in safety. Then carefully covering his face, they sat down

side by side under a tree, and thus conversed.

“Khoshboo, light of my eyes, and beloved of my heart,” said Mobarek, “what words have ever been invented, or what ingenuity can ever draw up from the depths of my feelings language sufficiently eloquent to express my love and gratitude? Let me kiss the print of your footsteps, let the dust of your slippers be ointment for my eyes, let me do anything however servile, to shew you how truly I esteem your kindness. But, my love, no one was ever kind in vain; you will reap golden harvests for this, even in this world, for I feel a something within my breast which tells me, that no King and Queen have ever undergone vicissitudes such as ours, without some speedy and violent reaction. However, laying aside such like expectation for the present, we must form some plan for the future. Tell me, oh my fair one, whither shall we first bend our steps?”

Khoshboo heard these words with mixed feelings of joy and grief, her ears enjoying the sound of her husband's voice, and hearing the expression of his sentiments

with delight; whilst her eyes were averted from him, lest she could catch a view of those features which would dissipate the illusion and make her sicken with loathing. She said, "Let not the conduct of your faithful Khoshboo be too highly valued. She pursues only that which is her duty. Once convinced that you are her true and lawful husband, what else can she do? Let our energies now be turned to the one object of liberating you from the thralldom of your present state. We must seek the country of the magi, acquire their science and then return and punish the usurper of our throne, by wresting your own lawful face from his vile carcase, and restoring to him his most unblest features. We must turn our steps towards the west, and may Allah and his holy prophet protect us."

"Yes," said Mobarek, "after having been driven from Cashgar, such was my original intention; it was my intention to make a vow, permitting the hair of my head to grow its full length, vowing that no razor should approach it until I was reseated on my throne, and thus

perform a pilgrimage to the tomb of the prophet Nough el Nebi. But now, light of my eyes, that scheme is at end—I devote myself to you—we will go seek, wherever it may be found, a counter-spell to the horrible one which affects me, and may Allah in his mercy direct our footsteps.”

Having conversed for some time, and by mutual expressions of confidence in the decrees of providence, soothed their minds into resignation, they proceeded again on their journey. But ignorant of the road and of the relative position of places, they pursued a track, which instead of leading them on to the high road of Samarcand, conducted them into a valley where they became entangled in the intricacies of the mountain scenery.

They had brought sufficient food to last them for the first days' sustenance, and consequently were so far independant, and being unwilling to hold communication with King Kamram's subjects, they avoided villages and determined to pass the night in some mountain cavern.

With this view, striking into a deep dell,

Mobarek followed a path which led through a delicious succession of woodlands, and which gradually ascending, brought him to a spot so secluded from the gaze of man, that he determined there to take up his quarters. He caused Khoşboo to dismount from her beast, and placing her in safety under a rock, which formed sufficient protection from the weather, he there spread his cloak, and gathering leaves and brushwood, made her a bed, whilst the packsaddle of the ass, became a substitute for a pillow. Then spreading the meal before her, he invited her to recruit her energies with food, whilst he proceeded to a distance to perform the same operation, lest she might behold his so much dreaded face.

Scarcely had they finished their meal, when, to their surprize and apprehension, they heard the sound of horses' footsteps ascending the mountain in the same direction which they had come, accompanied by men's voices. Mobarek immediately drove the ass from the spot where he was openly grazing, to a dense part of the wood, and placed himself in such a posi-

tion with Khoshboo, that they might see the intruders without being themselves seen.

As the strangers approached, it was discerned that they consisted of two horsemen fully equipped, and armed from head to foot; fierce and rude looking men, and strange to say, wearing a dress, parts of which assimilated to that worn by Mobarek. Their horses appeared overcome by fatigue, and they were themselves dusty and way-stricken.

Having reached the spot immediately facing Mobarek and Khoshboo they drew up, stopped and looked back, as if awaiting more companions. And in so doing, they continued their conversation as follows :

“It is in truth wonderful,” said the youngest to the older horseman, “that so long a time should have elapsed since we heard from him. Is he dead think you, or do you think he has intentionally played us false.”

“What do I know,” said the elder man, who was called Cheikh Omar, “what do I know, Norouz? Our Chacal Bey is not an every day man; with that secret devilry of his he performs strange things. Perhaps, he has

changed himself into another, and could not change back again; we must put our trust in Allah and have patience."

"That is very likely," said Norouz; "to say the truth, when we were at Cashgar the other day, I could not help indulging in strange suspicions. Every one was speaking out boldly upon the alteration which had taken place in the King, and that he was not the same man he was known to be before; but as Allah is great, such a thing could never be."

"What words are you throwing into the air, youngster!" said Cheikh Omar. "Chacal become King of Cashgar—that would be fine, indeed, that would be like making a horse of an ass with a vengeance; besides, I know enough of the devil's magic to know, that Kings cannot be touched; they are too well guarded by talismans.—No, no, he is working out some money scheme, and before long we shall see his ugly face come back with loads of treasure at his back. Gold is the god he adores—he does not care for kingdoms; what could such a swine as he do with a kingdom?"

“ We shall see,” said Norouz ; “ time will tell us all things ; but here come the others.”

Upon which several additional cavaliers appeared and formed altogether a formidable body, who collectively wore every appearance of being a band of freebooters. They paused for some time, and the whole of their discourse consisted in expressions of surprize at the absence of Chacal, who was evidently their captain, and of speculations as to when he might be restored to them.

During this short rest, they expressed unbounded joy at having ultimately reached their home, regretted the toil and fatigue expended in an unsuccessful search after their leader, and then turning their horses' heads towards the ascent of the mountain, gradually disappeared from before Mobarek and Khoshboo.

It may be imagined with what intense interest the houseless wanderers lent their ears to what they had just heard. Their hearts rose in their mouths, their pulses beat with double speed, and a thousand schemes immediately came into their heads. Khoshboo, with



all a woman's quickness, was the first to perceive the advantages likely to accrue from the disclosures thus overheard.

"Joy of my soul," she exclaimed, "I see it all, your Khoshboo already sees you on your throne. We must now be upon our guard, active and circumspect. All depends upon you, Mobarek! If you be a tolerable actor, and will condescend to personify the hateful Chacal but for a short time, ere a week has elapsed you will again possess your musnud."

"I will do anything (but commit an injustice) to right myself and to please you," said Mobarek. "I also perceive the whole scheme, and please Allah! I will immediately attempt to accomplish that which our good destiny has so evidently placed before us. Did I not foretell this morning, O my Khoshboo, that some speedy re-action would succeed to this unnatural state of suffering."

It was then agreed between them that Mobarek should follow the band of freebooters into their retreat, and personifying Chacal, appear before them. He would then give them a woeful

account of his failure in the scheme of bringing away booty from Cashgar. Then stating how much he had been disconcerted by the earthquake, he would cheer them by laying before them a new prospect of gain, no less than plundering the treasure contained in the palace of the King of Cashgar, to the success of which he would stake his head, seeing that he possessed one, now in his company, a woman, an inmate of the royal harem, well acquainted with all the avenues of the palace, and who could conduct them to the very spot where the gold was deposited, having once been herself depositer of the keys of the treasure house.

Having invented this scheme, they passed the night in anxious expectation of the morning, determined to put it into execution.

As soon as Mobarek was on foot, having warned Khoshboo not to leave her hiding place, but patiently to wait his return, he set off in search of the habitation of the freebooters. Tracking the footsteps of the horses, which after much winding gradually led to the entrance of a large cavern, he stopt for a moment to take breath and to collect his

thoughts preparatory to the part he was about to act.

He had scarcely paused a minute, before he beheld the very youth seated on a stone at the mouth of the cavern, whom he had seen in conversation with the elder horseman; and who having caught sight of him, arose, apparently greatly surprized, and then uttered an exclamation of joy, which echoed throughout the place and brought many of his companions forth.

“Come! come!” he cried out, “the Aga is come!” Then running towards Mobarek, he said, seizing his hand and kissing it, “You are welcome, your place has long been empty.”

Others also came running forward, and among them Cheikh Omar, who appeared to be the second in command after Chacal, and he made lively demonstrations of pleasure upon beholding Mobarek.

Mobarek in the meanwhile was slow to speak, fearing lest the sound of his voice might awaken suspicion, but at length feigning to be ill, he said with a sick man's accent,

“Allah alone is strong, alone is powerful—we, what are we?”

“What has happened?” was exclaimed by various voices, whilst the whole assembly gazed at each other insurprize, seeing that, indeed, there was a great dissimilitude between Mobarek's voice and Chacal's.

“Is he ill?—perhaps he is changed, can this be Chacal Beg?” were questions asked in various tones, until Mobarek again spoke and said,

“I have been ill—my voice has long failed, but please Allah, I shall be better after I have related my story. My good destiny has turned upon me—takdeer has been perverse—I have lost everything, my horse, my arms. Oh that city without a saint, Cashgar!—Inshallah, we will burn its father still! But give ear, if I have not brought away riches, I have with me what will lead to them, so do not allow yourselves to despond—Chacal Beg will still lead you on to riches.”

Upon hearing these words, the assembled gang began to stare and wonder; they felt a sort of creeping incredulity as to the person before them, for both in manner and voice he was entirely different to their captain, but still

his face was not to be mistaken, and that was too evident a proof to be rejected. They flocked around him and requested him to explain what he meant, and how he came to be possessed of a guide to the King of Cashgar's treasures.

He made them sit down in a circle, and then with much ingenuity devised a tale suited to their capacities, by which he showed that during the earthquake, when he was about making a grand stroke which would have secured great riches, he was seized, and dragged before the authorities, his horse and everything he possessed taken from him, and he would, perhaps, have been put to death, had he not excited compassion in one of the King's favourite ladies, who having obtained his pardon, he was expelled the city. That during this event, from his knowledge in magic, he had discovered one of that lady's attendants, who being favourable to him, agreed to accompany him hither, and she was ready to assist in furtherance of the enterprize which he now proposed to them, adding, that she was deposited at some little distance, ready immediately to proceed. He proposed to enter the city at nightfall, the band

being disguised as peasants, armed, and collected into a body, nothing was so easy, with the knowledge of the avenues of the palace as to enter at once, overcome the small resistance which might be made, and carry off abundance of treasure before the authorities could be roused.

As the whole gang possessed unbounded confidence in their captain, knowing him to be a magician and capable of doing wonderful things, they did not for a moment doubt the practicability of his scheme, and when he finished his explanation, they expressed their approbation by exclamations of *Mashallah* and *Evallah*.

Mobarek seeing how well he had succeeded, took upon himself the airs of one in command, and although aware that he was remarked and gazed at with wonder and suspicion, still by constantly hinting how great was the power of magic, he confirmed them in the belief that the change which they observed in him was produced by that agency.

Having made every preparation to depart

on the following day, and being provided with a good horse as well as arms, both for himself and Khoshboo, his supposed slave, he then pointed out at the same time, the precise spot where he was to be found in case of need.

He found Khoshboo in an agony of apprehension, lest he should have failed; but when he explained the whole extent of his good luck, and the manner in which he had brought the gang to coincide in his scheme, her joy knew no bounds. She would have rushed into his arms and embraced him, but he entreated her to recollect that he was still a monster, and it was only by continuing to be such for a short time longer, that he could be released, and restored to himself.

Mobarek was a most extraordinary character for an eastern monarch. With all the powers of despotism in his hands, he always possessed a conscience, and misfortunes having been decreed to him, they had greatly improved his original excellent nature, adding much to the

delicacy and refinement of that conscience. He sat down near Khoshboo and said:

“Light of my eyes, my Khoshboo—I approach you for advice and consolation. We are now come to that pass, that I see blood must be shed in order to obtain possession of my throne; blood must be shed, and that only by my own hand. The usurper must die ere I can be restored to my rights; tell me, can I perform so hateful an act with the fear of God before my eyes?”

“What!” exclaimed Khoshboo, “are you to be deprived of your throne, your possessions, your very existence; is a wretch to steal even to your face; and can you doubt whether he be worthy of death? The thief who steals five tomans is he not condemned to death by law; what then can the man expect who steals a kingdom? Fear not, dearest husband; kill, by all means, kill—only be careful to say *Bismillah*, before you entirely cut off the traitor’s head, and then all will be well. Fear not, fear not—in the name of the prophet kill.”



Mobarek only required the concurrence of his dearest friend and adviser to reconcile him to performing an act which he abhorred, and having obtained that consolation, his mind became easy. He felt that the only mode of destroying the spell by which he was bound, was to destroy the cause of that spell, and having so done, he became certain that his own features would return to him.

Matters having been prepared for the departure of the expedition on the following morning, we must now return to the position of affairs at the court of Cashgar.

Chacal was a monster of iniquity, a coarse, sensual, and rapacious villain. As soon as he began to find that he was secure in the possession of the throne, and that he could proceed with safety in a career to which, by no stretch of imagination his thoughts had ever aspired, the iniquity of his nature became thoroughly manifest.

'Tis true that he had found much to contend with in the outset, but power and submission being already made to his hand, and cre-

dulity ready to confirm what the eye acknowledged, his course of iniquity was fully open to him.

Sometimes, indeed, the acts of the usurper were almost too offensive, and too much at variance with the conduct of his predecessor for even a native of Cashgar to submit to without a thought or a doubt. His total ignorance upon all matters of government produced in the minds of his grand vizier and his secretaries of state, a conviction that he was overtaken by madness, and having made up their minds upon that head, they could never conceive that it could be attributed to any other cause. His principal characteristic was love of money—a lust for gold. His whole soul was absorbed in the one desire of amassing riches, and now feeling that he was possessed of power, and saw before him a whole nation which he contemplated as the mine into which he might dig without intermission, he did not care what acts of cruelty he committed, provided he gratified his ruling passion.

The people began to feel oppressed, and

comparisons were freely drawn between the present conduct of the sovereign and what it had been before the earthquake. Certain facts related by the barber Teeztrash, and confirmed by the journeyman cap-maker, which at first had been received as fiction, were now firmly believed as true; and thinking people began to conclude, that Cashgar had been entirely bewitched.

Prayers were privately put up at the mosques for a change; the dealers in magic, wise men and astrologers were consulted, and it was hoped, when the vengeance of Allah had been appeased, that some supernatural interposition would be manifested, which would as miraculously dispel the scourge as it had been miraculously applied.

At the particular time to which we allude Chacal was entirely absorbed in taking account of his money in the underground apartments where it was deposited, and there he passed much of his time, devising plans for securing more. His heart swelled with exultation when he found how large was the treasure

---

of which he was possessed, but still he required more. He publicly announced that a certain sum was necessary, and ordered it to be exacted by force if requisite.

Already the work of extortion had begun. The Jews first, those untried objects of robbery, under various pleas were despoiled of their goods. Presents were exacted from the rich, whilst no scheme of duplicity was left untried to secure an interest in matters where merchandize was concerned. The labours of the bastinado were in full activity upon the refractory from morning till night in the courts of the palace : no one felt safe in the possession of even the commonest necessaries.

One act of cruelty led on to another, until the whole city was thrown into a continuous state of apprehension. The immediate attendants of the palace became lax in their respective duties, the person of the Shah was hated, and each in his inmost heart fervently prayed that every day might prove the tyrant's last.

Such was the state of things on the day when Mobarek and Khoshboo, followed by the

gang of freebooters, approached the city of Cashgar. They entered just before the closing of the gates, by two and three at a time, and leaving their horses in an open space near one of the caravanserais under the care of two of the gang, they took refuge in some ancient ruined buildings for the night. At a preconcerted hour, the whole gang were collected near the secret entrance of the palace, headed by Mobarek and Khoshboo, and then picking their way stealthily along, they were to find access through avenues well known to their leaders into the gardens of the harem, and ultimately into the very body of the building where the King reposed. When the moment for enterprise was come, Khoshboo felt the alarm natural to woman's weakness, lest it should fail; but Mobarek finding himself at the very gates of his own palace, treading the soil of his native city, and exerting himself for the welfare of his subjects, so much was his heart inspired by feelings of conscience and dignity, by a sense of what was his duty as well as his due, that his arm was strengthened and his determination inflexible.

---

“ My Khoshboo !” he exclaimed, “ in another hour your husband will be King—fear not, but proceed.”

Then turning towards his followers he said :

“ Keep silence, and follow ; let no man shed blood till I give the word—follow me and observe my actions.”

They entered the secret gate unmolested ; no one was astir ; it would seem that the guards had been bribed to silence, so little appearance of watchfulness was there about the palace. They glided silently through some deserted courts until they entered the gardens of the harem. Here Mobarek stopped and marshalled his followers afresh.

Every step was now well known to him and Khoshboo, for often had they enjoyed these shaded retreats in each other's society. Mobarek here put up a mental prayer, entreating the protection of Allah and the prophet, then drawing his scimitar, clasped it well in his hand, and proceeded to the chamber where he was sure, from information gathered in the city, that Chacal was wont to repose. Khosh-

boo was close to him—he ordered the gang to pause and be prompt. He then cautiously stepped forward, and perceived that the curtain was lowered over the window straightway ordered it to be withdrawn, in case that it might throw light within, and then without more disguise, boldly threw open the door and entered, followed by his wife. He saw the bed extended in the midst, and at the foot thereof two women asleep. The noise he made on entering awoke the principal person, who rising from beneath the embroidered coverlet instantly discovered to Mobarek his own fate.

He required no other indication to ascertain that he had secured the proper victim, without giving him time to defend himself he flew upon him, sword in hand. Chacaband the meanwhile, at a glance seeing himself exposed to himself, became aware of his position at one bound stood on his feet, and seizing a pillow, attempted to ward off the blow as he was being dealt to him, exclaiming at the same time :

“ *Amán! Amán!* pity, oh pity!”

His gang, suddenly hearing the

known voice of their captain, advanced in a hurry to the spot, but arrived just in time to behold the breaking of the enchantment which had bound the lawful King of Cashgar. With one fell blow having brought his antagonist to the ground, Mobarek followed it by another, which severed his head from his body, and at that moment he felt that he was himself again. Khoshboo perceiving his well known countenance, fell at his feet in rapture, and the whole harem having by this time been roused, women, guards, and eunuchs came running in great haste from all quarters, and produced a scene which may, perhaps, be better imagined than described. The lawful King, sword in hand, standing near the headless body of his enemy, was surrounded by those who had approached him, kneeling with their foreheads touching the earth, whilst the gang of freebooters, startled and astonished at what had taken place, remained in a state of bewilderment, uncertain how to act.

“See,” said Mobarek, as he pointed to the dead man, “see the effects of a lie—my face has been a lie, and this wretched man’s face



has been a lie also—such is and such will ever be the fruit of all deceit—sooner or later it must be visited by evil.”

His first act was to send for the barber Teeztrash; his next to order an assembly of the great officers of state, whilst he insisted that the body of the traitor Chacal should remain exactly in the same position in which it had fallen, to be guarded by his own guards who were ordered to remain in attendance.

When the extraordinary event, which had occurred in the palace, was known throughout the city, a sensation was created such as had never been before witnessed. It was quite certain that a strange man had arrived, and that he had killed the King, but marvellous to say, the King was there still. Such was the news. It was also certain that the barber Teeztrash had been sent for. Every one was in expectation of something still more miraculous. The hearts of men leaped into their mouths with joy, at the bare idea of a change.

The barber Teeztrash followed the King's officer with fear and trembling; he had frequently spoken his mind upon the state

things, and made disclosures of all that had taken place in his shop, asserting thereby how much he was convinced that magic had been resorted to in giving Cashgar a bad King in exchange of a good one. He, therefore, became the prey of uncertainty and apprehension. As he approached the palace, and was conducted through its avenues leading into the harem, his apprehension increased, for he found them thronged with the dignitaries and officers of the court, their faces full of anxiety, and eagerly pressing forward to satisfy their curiosity.

As soon as Teeztrash appeared before Mobarek, the King having obtained a glimpse of his person, called to him by name, and said :

“Stand forward, O man, look you hither.— See this head,” pointing to that of the prostrate Chacal, “say, is this the head you operated upon on the day of the earthquake?” The barber taking it up with great reverence, inspected it and exclaimed :

“As I am your slave, it is—here is the slit in the ear which I remarked.”

Then said the Shah, before the assembled

crowd, vizier, dignitaries, men of the  
and others,

“Then it is plain that this is my enemy,  
necromancer, the man who has worn my face  
and whose face I have worn. This is the  
creant whom, through the mercy of Allah,  
I have slain, and am thus restored to the throne  
of my ancestors.”

Rejoicings, such as had never before been  
known, broke out in the city of Cashgar,  
throughout the whole territory thereof. The  
reign of terror was over, and people blessed the  
true and lawful King. Mobarek having com-  
mised the gang of freebooters with much of  
treasure which he had promised to them, recom-  
mended them never more to appear in his domi-  
nions, and despatched troops to see them well  
of it. He also sent proper messages and ad-  
monitions to his brother-in-law, Kamram, giving  
him many salutary warnings and recommen-  
ding him, who professed to set the law of Allah  
always before him, not to restrict his actions  
to words alone, but to shew his faith by being  
charitable as well as holy. He sent a new cloak  
to the old man of God, and ordered him

wear it or incur his displeasure, for that he would not allow so unblushing a hypocrite as he to live in his neighbourhood, a disgrace to his profession.

Having performed these acts, he then devoted himself to his beloved Khoshboo, cherished her as the greatest of all earthly treasures, and the annals of Cashgar relate that no King was ever before or after so beloved and respected as Mobarek Shah. As for Teeztrash, the barber, there was no end to his sagacity, and all in good time he became grand vizier to the illustrious state of Cashgar.

---

After I had complimented the Mirza upon his story, assuring him that so far as my opinion went, he had redeemed his pledge of giving an appearance of truth to a miracle, I asked him whether he had any ulterior object in view in relating it to the Shah.

“What can I say,” answered my friend, “perhaps yes, perhaps no. The truth is, in this our Persia, and particularly in this our court, we are overrun with hypocrisy—go where you

will, we find men with two characters, or a vulgar saying is, beards with two colours. I wished to shew, in the character of O, how impossible it is for a man to succeed in disguising his real disposition, and in the person of Mobarek, to illustrate the truth, no station, however exalted, is exempt from vicissitudes of life. It was my aim to pronounce that common species of duplicity where the wicked man deceives his neighbour whilst his face wears the appearance of honesty, as well as to point out how providence frequently, by unexpected means, induces the discovery of guilt."

"As you live," said I, "you have not seen a nation like yours will receive how strongly precept can be inculcated by parable; but tell me, how am I, a stranger, to distinguish the hypocrite from the honest man?"

"You," said my friend, "who are not acquainted with our manners, who are unacquainted with the interior of our harems, and ignorant of the rudiments of our education, cannot be unpractised in our tricks and deceptions."

what are the elements of our education, but the elements of deceit ! The first thing we are taught is the art of making compliments, *chum wa hum* as it is called—a child who can scarcely lisp, particularly be he a prince, or the son of an Omrah, will exercise his little tongue in pouring forth a string of phrases of which he knows not the meaning, and utter them with appropriate gestures, as if he were the first of men. But it is among our priesthood, that the vice I complain of is the most conspicuous. A very large turban is one of the insignia of godliness—some of the Mollahs of Ispahan wear them of immense sizes, and in addition have ample sleeves to their cloaks, with large skirts, in order effectually to cover their hands and feet when they are seated, by way of shewing humility and deference, whilst at the same time, it is their ambition to be ushered to the uppermost places at the *mejlis* or assembly. They would be incensed were they not so distinguished ; for all their outward demonstrations of piety are only put on as a passport to obtain respect. Then they sigh forth holy aspirations and quote largely from the Koran. But see

our praying places, which are conspicuously erected, high and open to the gaze of all the world, at the city gates or in the market place there you will often see men ostentatiously saying their prayers, apparently absorbed in holy meditation, whilst their object is to acquire a reputation for sanctity. The persons who thus exhibit themselves, generally wear a mortified look, particularly in the month of Ramazan, to announce to the world how rigorous is their fast, and they are most scrupulous upon all things clean and unclean. They will brook no any vessel that has been touched by impurities, or used for unlawful purposes — to study the uses of all such vessels—some to honour, some to dishonour. All meats are well known to them, in their clean and unclean qualities, and they will condemn a man to the miseries of Jehanum for ever, who has transgressed in the smallest particular provided he has so done to be seen by men, whilst they will pass over in silence so flagrant an act of deceit or iniquity. Now it appeared to me, that in the character of Chahar I have exemplified the hypocrite, who un-

the face of one eminently good and beloved, performed acts the most odious, and the most to be reprobated."

"I fear," said I, "that as long as you are governed by a despotic King, from whom alone emanates all advancement and distinction, that duplicity will be one of the principal vices of your court. Where there is no independence of character, there can be but little individual exertion, and where there is no individual exertion, the general well-being is at a low ebb."

"What can I say?" remarked my friend; "you speak of a thing of which we know nothing—what means independence? it means nothing to us, who are never certain whether what we are toiling to obtain, be it riches, be it other worldly advantages, will remain ours beyond the moment of actual possession. A despotic Shah, an injured vizier, a grasping favourite, a corrupt judge are all leagued against a nation's weal, and the system of government, which they induce, makes slaves of us all."

"And will the Shah understand," said I, "can he comprehend all the recondite meaning contained in the story?"



"If he does not," said the Mirza, "it will be my business to make him understand; we have our own modes of conveying unpleasant truths to royal ears."

"But supposing he did comprehend," said I, "and was willing to correct abuses, would you have you to propose by way of remedy? Have you any specifics for making corrupt statesmen honest?"

"As Allah is the true Allah," said the Mirza, "I have never thought of any remedy beyond the *felek* and the scymitar. Have you any remedy to propose? You, I know in your country, do many strange things, and add many contrivances which were never thought of since the world began; perhaps you may have some remedy against thieves and liars?"

"You do not say ill," said I; "you will perhaps not believe me when I tell you that we have provided a remedy against such an evil."

"Speak," said my friend, with great animation; "whatever you will say, I am ready to hear, and what is more to believe."

"Well then," said I, "without recurring to the aid of talismans, charms, or diviners, v

simply allow every one, who chooses, to write down, print on paper, and publish to the world his thoughts and observations upon the actions of men, and to give an account of passing events. This scrutiny, which is subject to certain laws, is the great secret by which we controul dishonesty, and secure integrity, and this would be the remedy which I would propose in this country, against the deceit and hypocrisy of which you complain."

"*Astafarallah*, heaven forbid?" exclaimed the Mirza—"what words are these? would you fill the city with poisonings and murder—would you throw the whole nation into one universal turmoil of rage and violence? You do not know the Persians! however smooth-tongued in their speech, and polished in their manners they may appear, yet vanity is their ruling passion, and there is not the lowest mule driver who would bear to be criticized and commented upon, without a desire for revenge. No, no," said my friend, shaking his head, "keep to your modes of securing public virtue, we must keep to ours, and we have only one, which is the stick. A good felek and four

stout tent pitchers, will do more for us than your newspapers."

The remainder of our conversation, which continued to embrace the same subject, is not worthy of being recorded, and after having sufficiently puzzled my friend upon the nature of the liberty of the press, of the manner in which it acted upon the whole nation, and upon its advantages as well as the contrary, I left him, securing a promise that he would not fail to communicate to me any future stories which he might narrate.

## VISIT VI.

It was not long before I paid another visit to my friend ; it was the opening of spring—the winter had passed away—the Persians were shedding their furs, and the trees were in the bud. The Mirza informed me that it was the custom for the Shah, at this season, to go through a course of spring medicines, when he kept to his private apartments, dressed in a sick costume, and then indulged himself in the luxuries of literature, calling upon him for an appropriate and entertaining story. To meet such emergency, the Mirza informed me that he had composed a tale, which he thought might be adapted to the temper of a King in physic, and invited me to drink coffee and sherbet with him, when he would relate it, if I so pleased. I was charmed with his courtesy and attention, and did not lose a moment in

obeying his call. At the appointed hour he went to his house, when after giving me a cordial and flattering reception, he frankly avowed that he was much pleased to be allowed to rehearse his story before an auditor like me before he imparted it to the Shah, and added that he would be loth to have an audience of his own countrymen, who, perhaps, might take some unfair advantage, and excite the Shah's anger against him, for having narrated to them that which ought first to meet the Shah's ear.

We were soon seated, and after some preliminary talk without which nothing serious was undertaken in Persia, the Mirza began as follows :

---

#### STORY OF COSSIM THE STUDENT

“ One of the most assiduous students in the College of Shah Sultan Hussein at Ispahan when it was first instituted, was Cossim, a youth of the most fervid imagination, and of a very enthusiastic turn of mind. He devoted himself to study from his earliest youth, in

ardent a manner, that confinement began to impair his health, notwithstanding the strength and symmetry of his person. Being naturally contemplative, he pursued the study of theology with a zeal and fervour that had never before been witnessed in the schools, fasting often, and keeping himself secluded from the world for whole days and weeks together. He soon exhausted every book relating to the true faith of Islam, and finding that its provisions did not sufficiently withdraw him from the world, he explored the books and doctrines of the Suffies, which he found better suited to his ideas and aspirations, so much so, that he devoted himself with redoubled zeal to carrying into practice the notions which they inculcated.

He was led to contemplate his body as a mere case or machine, fitted up as the receptacle of an essence, and that essence immortal, and loathing its impurities, his whole existence was passed in attempts to mortify it, in order that he might enjoy to the full, the expansion of his better nature. He gradually began to esteem all men as beings full of natural corruption :

hating their sensualities and abominating the mean pursuits, and growing into spiritual pride, he looked upon worldly objects quite below him. He had seen a man who had (so he hoped) succeeded in creating a being infinitely better adapted to approach the worship and magnify his Creator, than any of the multitude which composes the mass of mankind. He had frequently heard of the famous gardens of Irem, and had read the enthusiastic book the Humayan Nameh, in which its author in one of his religious transports claims, "*Ya Khodawend!* I have escaped from the storms and vicissitudes of the world, and it appears to me that I have reached the centre of the garden of Irem, since I have acquired that peace of mind, enjoyed by those who have quitted the world to serve thee!" His imagination was fired by the possibility of the actual existence of this blessed spot on earth's surface, for he had read that it had been planted and prepared by the ancient King Schedad Bendad, in Arabia the Happy, for the habitation of a pure race of spiritual men. He himself, and he began to consider why he should not flee to it as a patrimony to which

from his principles and propensities, he was lawfully entitled, and thus be freed from the intrusions and grossness of desires, incident to this world of flesh and corruption.

These ideas gradually expanded in his mind, until he began to think it not only easy, but incumbent upon him to realize them, and he daily craved for inspirations to strengthen him in his pursuit. He determined to retire from the world for forty days and forty nights, for the purposes of fasting and prayer, during which time, he made no doubt that he would receive some intimation from above, which would settle the firmness of his resolve beyond the power of change. To this effect, he sallied forth unseen from the cell in his college, and took himself to the mountain skirting the plain of Ispahan, and selecting a cavern for his dwelling, he there subjected his body to the severest mortifications, and so reduced himself by fasting, want of sleep and mental excitement, that at the end of the time of his probation, he might be fairly said to be but a few degrees removed from positive insanity; but he was resolved to search the gardens of Irem



—he had grappled with his odious body, he had discomfitted its carnal propensities, he felt that he was fitted to enjoy the society of refined and purified spirits, and armed with a certainty that God had approved of his holy aspirations, without delay he set off for those countries, where he supposed the object of his pilgrimage was situated.

He took neither letter nor money, but with shoes on his feet, a skin thrown loosely over his shoulders, and armed with a simple staff, he began his journey, trusting to providence and his own powers of endurance for daily sustenance. Such a personage did not fail to be well received and hospitably treated, and Cossim found no impediment in his path, as he journeyed on foot to the shores of the Persian Gulph. Reaching Abousheher, he was taken across the gulph, purely for the love of God, by a boatman who was on the point of departure, and was landed on the opposite coast of Bahrein. Here having attained a new country, among a new people, speaking a different language to his own, his difficulties began, but nothing daunted, he pursued his

course through the heart of Arabia, carrying provisions just enough to keep body and soul together, and journeyed in the direction where he expected to find his ultimate and much cherished resting place. The wild population and the arid deserts, which met his path at every step, would have appalled many a stouter heart than his, but being upheld by enthusiasm and religious conviction he did not despond. He travelled on with great weariness, over the most desolate country that the imagination can conceive, and at length reached a region so mountainous and stony, that to any one but an enthusiast a miracle from heaven only could have created therein anything to be called a garden. Here was a thirsty wilderness, intersected with arid rocks tossing their summits to the skies, whilst in the hot fiery valleys below there was nothing to relieve the traveller from the scorching rays of the sun, save the occasional projection of some friendly rock.

Cossim having clambered to a prominent summit looked around him with dismay; his heart began to fail—he saw no indications of

a retreat, such as he had imagined, nor did he meet with any one who could direct his steps. All looked more like the fragment of a wall than an avenue to one of its brightest spots. Here a chasm yawned, there black rocks in an impenetrable array formed a barrier—at a distance rose crags and ridges, giving the appearance of a gigantic saw to the horizon, whilst in the foreground nothing was seen but burnt up stubble, bounded by more rocks, and occasionally a serpent winding its stealthy way through the crevices.

Day was coming to a close—occasionally might be heard the wild cry of the jackal, or in the distance the roar of the lion. Cossim looked about him for some place where he might pass the night in safety, and espying a cavern on an adjacent mountain he repaired thither as fast as his wearied limbs could carry him.

Having reached the cavern, he found it consisted of a deep indentation of the solid rock, the interior of which seemed to wind and branch into intricate avenues, looking dark and mysterious. On its surface he remarked some indications of sculpture, as if the p

had once been used for purposes of habitation—but solitude, deep appalling solitude, overwhelmed not only it, but the whole region round about. Cossim gazed around him with dismay, but at length the necessity which he felt for protection overpowering his courage, he knelt down and poured forth his whole soul in prayer. He prayed so fervently that the surrounding rocks rung in echoes to his voice, and the call he made for support was repeated in long and mysterious accents from one eminence to another.

“Oh Allah,” he said, “who art Lord of the desert as well as of the fertile paradise, who art about the paths of thy creatures, be they in the agonies of death or in the safe abodes of happiness, I implore thy protection—strengthen my weakness, infuse thy holy and reviving spirit into my drooping soul, and give thy servant courage and perseverance to encounter the difficulties which surround him.”

He prayed long in this strain, and had paused awhile to take breath, when he heard a slight noise in the interior of the cavern as of footsteps; turning his head and

straining his eyes to the utmost, to his astonishment he perceived a figure which, owing to the gloom, at first he could not discriminate whether it were man or beast, until at length he espied a stately old woman bending her steps slowly towards him.

Her appearance was almost supernatural, for although she possessed the dress and the body of a common living soul, yet there was that expression in her eye and in the cast of her features, which evidently announced a being who had dealings with powers not of earth. In truth she was a *Peri banou*, or Peri of the first quality; and she soon accosted the modest youth uttering words which both astonished and soothed him.

Extending her right hand which she pointed to the sky, whilst she clasped her garment with the left, she exclaimed in a voice piercing, and at the same time, impressive,

“By what miracle hast thou reached this spot, oh youth! where none come, but beings who seek for heaven and spurn the earth?”

Cossim rose from his seat and stood upright as she approached, and kissing the hem of her garment, said :

“It has been a chance, indeed, a caprice of destiny which has brought me here—but, woman or witch, peri or jin, whatsoever you be, in truth you see before you one who seeks heaven and spurns the earth, and has come hither in search of the garden of Irem, being disgusted with the filth and impurities of base humanity. Will you direct my steps thither? Oh grant me this prayer, and Cossim will pray for you till he feels by his progress in excellence, that Allah has heard his prayer.”

“Thou art beside thyself, oh youth,” exclaimed the woman, “the garden of Irem seekest thou? it shall be opened unto thee, but thou prayest for that of which thou knowest nothing. We reign here absolute—we can do thee good—lay down to rest and fear nothing—all shall be granted as thou wilt.”

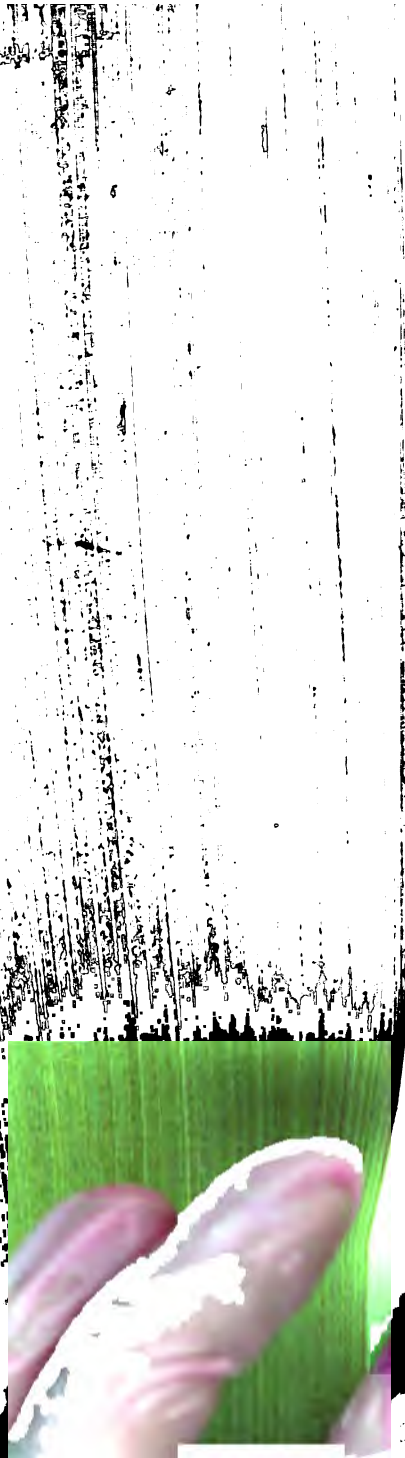
“Blessings be upon you,” said Cossim, “I am indeed weary and much in want of rest; and with you for a protectress I will lay myself down in full confidence, that refreshed as I hope to be, you will to-morrow be my guide

his eyes fascinated by the objects presented to them. There in truth he saw what his utmost ingenuity could never have conceived, and then exclaimed with swelling rapture:

“The garden of Irem! the garden, the blessed, the holy retreat!”—Such a profusion of beauties, so glorious a prospect was before him, that he pressed his hands against the rock in anger at the barrier opposed to him, when to his breathless astonishment, he found the hard substance cede, become as soft and pliant as wool, and then with scarcely an effort he fairly walked through the wall as through water, and straightway found himself within the enclosure.

Then, indeed, his ravished eyes beheld sights which no pen or tongue can describe. He advanced up a verdant knoll, his senses entranced in delight and astonishment, and from its summit he gained an extended and general view of this delicious and celebrated garden.—What a transition from the thirsty arid wilderness!

The surface of the ground was agreeably



varied by gentle slopes leading to open flat spots which again diverged to higher hills, giving to the eye a long and pleasing succession of vistas, producing alternately waving lines and shadowy places. This was ornamented by trees either in individual grandeur, united in graceful clumps, or thickly condensed into umbrageous woods. They consisted of every sort of tree that the imagination can conceive, the hardy trees of the north being blended with the delicate and waving vegetation of tropical climates, and so combined, that a supernatural taste had apparently been exercised in grouping their shapes and matching their colours, exercising that management in trees, which the florist exercises in his beds and lawns. Every object was so disposed, that the view was carried on without hindrance to the eye, light being scattered about in masses and gleams, bringing forward the objects which most required protrusion, whilst those of less consequence were thrown into deep shadows. Green in all its various hues, that colour so admirably adapted by the great artificer of nature to the eyesight of his creatures, was



the principal colour throughout the landscape, but was so ingeniously diversified, as not to be universal.

Freshness and life were the characteristics of the whole scene, and Cossim in beholding it felt such a rush of health and spirits in each fibre of his frame, that he might be said to inhale happiness through every sense. But this was not a tenantless paradise, for buildings of the most perfect models met the eye in varied succession, some just peeping through the trees, others more exposed to view, and others still nearer entirely developed, exhibiting the happiest combination of taste. Water either in brilliant running streams, in mirror-like sheets, murmuring in fountains or roaring in cascades, everywhere so artificially managed, that it was made either to reflect or to undulate in waves as best adapted to the scenery through which it flowed. The atmosphere of the heavens seemed to be entirely adapted to the spot. The air came so softly to the feeling, and was inhaled so imperceptibly, that it infused content and calm, whilst an undescribable freshness gave elasticity to the body, and

encouraged life to spend itself in activity. Cossim threw himself down on the soft grass in deep ecstasy, contemplating the scene before him, and wondering how such things could be—here indeed was happiness on earth—here indeed did repose from earthly cares and vicissitudes appear prepared for him, and here did he hope, in grateful humility, to be allowed to pass that portion of his existence which might be deducted from his immortality.

Having well sated his eyes with the beauties of the landscape, he turned them towards the habitations by which it was studded, and there he perceived the inhabitants, who seemed to pursue no avocations but those of pleasure and enjoyment, for no where did he perceive anything like labour. Some were seated in groups, others carried about in litters, others again were gliding over the surface of the lake, or seated on the margin of the running streams, but none seemed devoted to labour.

He was determined to approach, in order to view them more narrowly, and when he had determined upon the path to pursue, he selected the most magnificent building as the

one to examine first. It was abundantly spacious, some parts entirely open to the air, others enclosed; there was a beauty and a majesty about its structure which no rules of architecture could define. At once it struck the eye as beautiful, so inimitable were the combinations of proportion and fitness. Nothing was seen, for which a good reason was not immediately suggested; there were no ornaments merely for ornament's sake, but the requisite parts were all ornaments, whilst all the ornaments were requisite parts. It was light but solid, gay though majestic, convenient though apparently adapted to pleasure. In what happy skill it was fashioned, none but the genius that executed the design could account, but most true it was, that the whole inspired Cossim with the highest idea of the refinement and sagacity of the people by whom it was possessed.

“Indeed,” thought he, “how can any but the most perfect building belong to so perfect a paradise of beauty?”

All breathed the air of enchantment, but so there was, apparently, so much of man's invention

tion throughout the whole scene, that such things he conceived were not incongruous with our earthly state.

He now had sufficiently approached some of the inhabitants to be able to distinguish their persons and appearance. Although they looked like the common descendants of Adam, yet there existed an undefinable something about them, which made them appear fashioned to suit the place, its scenery and its peculiar atmosphere. They looked more polished than plain men and women—all of the same age—young and still sedate, made for life and activity and yet quiescent.

Indeed there was a sort of contemplative look about them, something approaching to the listlessness of the idle and the indolent, which might make a beholder suppose them to be sated with enjoyment. Cossim feeling conscious that his dress and appearance being different to theirs, would attract great attention were he perceived, stole with caution to a spot where several were collected, reposing in listless attitudes, near a lovely pleasure house, where he heard the following colloquy in a lan-

guage totally new to him, but strange to say which he could understand every word.

“ I am tired of this state of eternal happiness,” said a commanding figure ; “ were possible to feel some annoyance, even for an hour, it would be some change to us, and happiness would follow misery ; but here we live without the power of complaining. How could I have rebellion to quell as was my wont during the course of my reign, or could I occasionally be in fear of my life, then this existence might be tolerable, but as it is, it overwhelms from excess of delight.”

“ Your Majesty is perfectly right in what you say,” said a short figure with a halt and ungainly gait, “ I declare that I often find myself longing for misery, as one often yearns for the appearance of a cloud in a country of eternal sunshine. How I should like to feel some of that feverish doubt and apprehension which often pervaded my breast during the battles of Angora, or some of that exultation which I enjoyed on seeing the approach of the fatal Bajazet ! But since our blessed prophet has decreed the delights of paradise and hath s

us to Irem for a foretaste thereof, all we have to do is to sit down and be contented."

"By my beard," said a dignified personage, "when I recollect some of my narrow escapes, particularly in that affair with Ilek Khan, when my gallant elephant dragged him with his trunk from off his horse, and stamped him to pieces with his feet, and consider the peaceable nature of my present existence, I do sometimes wish for excitement and activity—but God is great!" he added with a sigh. "I should like to know Ferdousi's opinion of our present state. I saw him here not long ago."

Cossim was struck with astonishment at the words he heard. Those who had uttered them, were no less personages than the great conqueror Jenghiz, the notorious Timour the lame, and the cruel and enterprizing Nadir Shah. He listened again, and from what he heard, he found that those who were congregated in that particular spot, and occupied that portion of the garden, were characters who had ruled over Asia as Kings, Caliphs, Vakeels, or Emperors. Struck with awe, he was afraid to stir, little considering that the same miracle

which could have changed their worldly nature into their present state, might also operate the same change upon himself; and indeed it was not long ere he discovered that he was no longer the same Cossim who had left Ispahan an emaciated woe-stricken youth, but that he also partook of the aspect of universal brilliancy which pervaded everything about him. His person was renovated, his garments were refashioned to the place, and the infirmities of his nature seemed to have been replaced by new and more exalted powers both of mind and body. There was, however, something in his appearance, which struck those who first perceived him as novel, and immediately he was accosted and overwhelmed with inquiries. It was evident that in all the questions addressed to him, a lurking desire to belong to the world might be discerned—they were questions put by beings impatient of ease and undisturbed quiet.

One inquired who was the present possessor of the throne of Persia, and appeared anxious to ascertain its political state; another wished to obtain news of families whose names had

long ceased to exist ; others inquired concerning the great men of Asia, who they were and what their pretensions. All seemed to yearn towards objects which might afford them occupation.

As Cossim advanced further into the paradise, he found greater local beauties to admire, and was astonished to meet among its inhabitants with every name that had been famous in the real world. The more he mixed with them, the more he discovered the same desire for excitement, which he had remarked in those whom he had first met—and as time elapsed, and season succeeded season, so did the same feeling creep into the breast of Cossim. Unalloyed prosperity began to sit heavy upon him. He longed for opportunities to exercise the faculties of his mind. An equality of perfection in beings, constituted as himself, seemed to him incongruous ; he wished for opportunities to judge between right and wrong—for occasions where exertion was necessary, where he might be refreshed by the vicissitudes of suffering evil and enjoying good. All human good seemed to him as intolerable as



all human evil. Often did he discourse upon his state, with his fellow sufferers in happiness, and he found them all of the same mind.

Once he fell into a profound trance, and stated sleep did not form part of the nature of the inhabitants of Irem) and as he was so entranced in one of the deepest shades of a beautiful wilderness, he suddenly perceived before him, a form in every respect, such as belonged to the women of the real world, excepting that in beauty and loveliness far exceeded anything he had ever seen or his imagination could conceive to exist. He gazed upon her with wonder, and suddenly a passion of the most exalted nature became at once rivetted in his heart. She seemed to him to comprehend all he could desire as a possession. The tender interest which beamed in her countenance at his fate, awoke all his affections, and he exerted every sense to catch the words which she addressed to him :

“Cossim, give ear!” she said, in a voice like the sounds of living music, “your desire has been granted. You have been an inhabitant of the garden of Irem—you have, n

---

learnt the fallacy of human desires, when opposed to the dispensations of almighty wisdom. Were man constituted as he is, born for the enjoyment of uninterrupted happiness, he would be endowed with different faculties. The vicissitudes of life to him, are as much part of the frame work of nature, and are intended as much for his benefit, as the night which follows the day, the storms which gather in the heavens and clear the atmosphere he lives in, as the wars and disturbances which occur between nations, and thus keep the population of the globe in a healthy state ; learn then to live in the world as one of God's creatures, trusting in him through good and through evil, and be confirmed in this truth, that whatever is, is right—return to your former state, and through the remainder of your life think on me and on my words.”

Upon this, Cossim recovered from his trance, and as he looked about him, seeking with his eyes the paradise of which he had been an inhabitant, to his utter astonishment he found himself extended in the very cave where he had reposed under the protection of his tutelary

peri. He stood up, rubbed his eyes, shook himself, and loudly made his voice resound throughout the cavern and the surrounding dell, to ascertain whether he was really a conscious being or not. All was hushed—the same arid region, the same aspect of earth, the same things surrounded him—but he arose a wiser man, instead of the infatuated creature he had been—he exclaimed,

“Allah be thanked for all his mercies! Cossim is restored to himself, and he will no longer quarrel with his actual state of being. Looking around, he found spread before him food to refresh his body, raiment wherewith to clothe himself properly, and money to spend on his way. He called aloud again and again for the hope of inducing his benefactress to return to him before he departed, but no one appeared. Though disappointed, yet convinced that he was cared for, he at length straightway seized his staff, and equipping himself for his journey homewards, bounded down the mountain’s side, and full of new ideas and with some alacrity, he bent his steps through the dreary wilderness.

His thoughts particularly dwelt upon the vision which had appeared to him in the garden. He enjoyed an indefinite feeling of certainty that he should again behold the fair form which had so entirely ensnared his heart, and he did little else but repeat to himself the words which she had uttered.

“Oh for the possession of such a companion as a reality and for life; existence would then indeed be worth having!” thus he exclaimed to himself as he travelled onwards. The consciousness of being cared for, by a beloved object, which he felt gave a new charm to life, and with this additional feeling to the lesson which he had received, Cossim was restored to be an efficient member of the community for which he had been created.

He reached Ispahan in safety, not without some feelings of shyness at returning to his companions in the Medresseh, where it was his intention to take up his quarters. He returned to his own room in the quadrangle, which he had quitted just three months before, and found it precisely in the state in which he had left it; but as his sudden disappearance had caused con-

siderable astonishment and discussion among students, so his sudden re-appearance produced a great sensation. Some called him a madman, others honoured him as a saint, whilst those who knew him well, and the enthusiastic teachers of his character, said, leave him alone, and he will come right again. There was an austere Mollah in the college, one who wore a larger turban than his neighbours, who undertook to question Cossim upon the reason of his long absence, expecting to hear of severer acts of penance than those he had performed in the mountain; but what was his surprise to find instead of a saint, that he had talked to him as who, according to the Mollah's estimation, went far to owning himself an unmitigated sinner. In truth, Cossim's recent adventures had greatly cooled his feverish and excited mind, and the reflections which he was led to make, had not only restored him to a proper view of the world and of his own position in it, but had tended very materially to alter his opinions even upon those matters both civil and religious, which he had before held as sacrilegious to doubt. So much had he devo

his mind to reflection, that he even began to doubt the truth of our holy Koran and of its divine author. As for the Suffies and their doctrines, he looked upon them as mere dross, esteeming them as so many fools, who threw words to the wind, and inflated their understandings into bubbles. There was, however, one object which had taken fast hold upon his thoughts, and led his understanding in the bondage of delusion. That fair form, which he had seen in his trance, whatever it might be peri, or phantom, having put to flight all his other delusions, reigned supreme in his imagination, and he lived only in the hope of seeing it realized in a human shape. He loved and cherished its recollection with more than the ardour of the most devoted lover ; in his waking moments he dwelt with rapture upon the features which had beamed upon him, and in his sleep the beautiful vision ever stood before him.

It was not long before the change which had taken place in Cossim's belief, became known in the college, for being an enthusiast in whatever he did, and consequently no hypo-

critic, he would never restrain himself in an ever discussion ensued; he spared neither the rigid true believer, or the mystical sufficient, consequently was hated by both. He was enraged at his open revilings of his doctrines and practices, and he was pronounced to the head of the law, as a blasphemer, an infidel, and according to the letter of the Koran, he was deemed *Wajib al catt*, fit for a massacre. Possessing many friends on the account of the amiability of his character and the sweetness of his temper, he was warned either to recant or to seclude himself, for his destruction perhaps, his expulsion certainly from the college and the city had been decreed; but he heeded no such warnings—his determination seemed to lead him on to ruin; and to be engrossed by his love for his enchanting vision he seemed lost to every other consideration. At length the day came, when all that had been foretold him, was about to be accomplished. The college rose simultaneously and headed by the old Mollah in the large turban, Cossim stripped of his priest's dress and of every ornament and appendage, and thrust fairly neck and shoulders

---

---

into the street, with strict orders from the Muchtehed or high priest not to be again admitted. Had he resisted, it was intimated to him that the awful decree, making it lawful for any man to slay him, without incurring the penalty of retaliation of blood, was about to be proclaimed against him.

In this denuded and pitiful state, strange to say, his spirits were wonderfully sustained, solely by the hope that his lovely vision would again appear, cheer him by her countenance, and direct him by her advice. He walked slowly and deliberately down the magnificent avenue of the Chahar Bagh, and having reached the bridge of Alaverdi Khan, and the banks of the Zainderood, he sought the shade of an arch, and straightway threw himself full length on the ground to be ready to receive whatever fate might award him, as well as to indulge in the blissful excursions of his wandering fancy. He had not been there long before he heard a coming footstep, but it evidently was not that of a phantom—there was something substantial and corporeal in its tread, and on looking up he beheld a woe-



stricken old man approaching, bearing up his person all the appearance of misery and decrepitude.

"You are welcome, my son," exclaimed the old man; "do not stir, sit, sit—I am nothing, I am altogether a wretch, worthy no one's notice. I will enjoy the shade as well as yourself; there is that left to me at least; but stir not—I am nothing."

"You have the full power," exclaimed Cossim, "the shade is given to us all—it is God's gift, and as it may be had for nothing it is given to the great as well as to the small. I too am a thing of nought. I have just been banished from the face of mankind—but Inshallah! please God, I am not without hope."

"That is just the difference between you and me," said the old man, "I am without hope. The world has entirely turned upon me and I have no hope not even in shadow—here," said he smiling, "I have shadow without hope now you have both; you have hope and you have shadow."

"What news is this?" said Cossim, looking

well at the old man, from top to toe. "Are you really a man?" he said this in doubt, for he conceived that everything approaching him might straightway resolve itself into a jin or a peri.

"I am indeed a man," said the stranger, "of that I am certain, at least, for I know that all my miseries have come to me from the other sex, and that woman is only another word for misfortune."

"Ah, is it so," exclaimed Cossim, "then we differ greatly! for all my hope comes from woman."

"Abandon it, abandon it," roared out the old man, as if he were impelled by some maddening conviction; "nothing good can come from woman—false! false! all false as her eye and her smile. I have strange stories to relate; you are young—they may be of some use to you—shall I relate them?"

"Speak on, in the name of Allah," said Cossim, "I am all ear. I will give ear until you cry out *tamam*, enough."

“Hear me then,” said the old man, as his eye brightened up, and he began as follows :

---

#### STORY OF THE OLD MAN WITHOUT HOPE.

Whatever the poets have sung, whatever the love-sick youth in his first passion may have proclaimed, whatever the ravings of the madman Majnoon may have echoed abroad, all did I once fervently believe as relating to the beauty and perfection of womankind. Had you known me young, when full of the vigour and enthusiasm of youth, I entered the world seeking a heart which would beat responsive to mine, you would not believe that what you now behold was the same being; but you must not allow myself to be carried away by my vain ravings, seeing that I have a matter of fact tale to relate.

My father was a man of good birth, otherwise he would never have been one of the body servants, or *Peish Khedmets*, to the gre

---

Shah Abbas, which he was. He enjoyed considerable influence over the mind of that extraordinary personage, for he could speak to him at times and seasons when others could not, and taking advantage of the humour of the moment, would persuade his royal master, by arts peculiar to an expert courtier, to accede to many things which no other man in the empire would ever dare venture to propose. This influence had reached to such a height, that the greatest nobles, even the grand vizier himself, did not think it beneath their dignity to curry favour with my father, securing his good offices by rich presents, backed by the most fulsome flattery. As I emerged from the harem and got out of the hands of nurses and *Lalehs*, I soon inhaled the intoxicating fumes of the court atmosphere. Being my father's favourite, I became the darling of those who sought his favour, and the flattery which rebounding from him, fell upon me, soon turned my brain, and left me a prey to the most extravagant conceit. At this juncture, a man of great wealth, one of the nobles, seeking

to rise at court and be distinguished by the Shah, became extremely anxious to make himself agreeable to my father, whose services it was much for his interest to secure.

Unfortunately, he was a wicked man—full of deceit, of undeviating falsehood, who never followed the straight path when he could take the crooked one, and in whom raged every quality that renders man odious and dangerous. His first approaches to acquire my father's good will, were by paying great attentions to me. He sought me at all hours—never came empty-handed—made me appropriate presents, and so awakened my too easy vanity that he caused me to deem myself the first of human beings, whilst he stood of course the second in that happy estimation. Thus caressed and honoured, he gradually unfolded the object he had in view, which was to secure my father's influence with the Shah, to raise him in station above the head of a hated and dreaded rival, who was too powerful to be dealt with single handed. The task was difficult,

for my honoured parent had been very considerably bribed by the opposite party, and although he lent a willing ear to the entreaties of my friend, still he shook his head in ominous uncertainty.

At length seeing that his affairs did not proceed with the rapidity he wished, my man of wealth and intrigue devised a mode of securing me most effectually in the meshes of the net which he wove, in order to ensnare me.

He gave a great entertainment of eating, drinking, dancing and fireworks, to which he invited all the great and powerful of the city, and in which his civilities to me were too pointed to be overlooked ; wherever my father was not seated, I became the honoured guest, and indeed the honours heaped upon me were quite oppressive. The principal object which my wily friend intended to secure, was no less a thing than my heart and affections, for one who has since been the cause of all my misery and present degraded state.

Immediately opposite to the seat I occupied at the entertainment in the great hall of

audience, was situated, high on the wall near the ceiling, a window which opened into the room below. It was crossed and recrossed with wooden frame work, but not sufficiently closed to prevent the seated guests perceiving persons within, and those persons females. Full as I was of poetry, of susceptibility to soft impressions, heightened as they were by vanity, and at that particular moment excited by the pleasures of the table, I was not long in perceiving that a pair of brilliant eyes were glaring to and fro behind the lattice work, and as I thought especially directed upon me. Instantly my warm blood began to circulate with emotion through my excited frame, my whole soul was condensed in the ardour of my gaze, and my eyes never for a moment forgot to look towards the mysterious window. Of a sudden, when the attention of the assembly was attracted without the apartment to witness an immense discharge of rockets, the window was thrown open and exhibited to my wondering eyes the face and person of a maiden more fascinating than was ever sung by poet.

*Bah! Bah! Bah!* what Hafiz ever beheld such orbs of light as were seen in those eyes! such a cypress waist, such brilliant complexion! What Saadi ever extolled the expression of features so lovely, or was excited into enthusiasm by the view of so all accomplished a person. I immediately saluted this divinity with every sign of the most profound devotion, when she in return kissing a flower which she held in her hand, then placing it on her heart, threw it close to me, unperceived by anyone, and straightway suddenly closed her lattice window. Upon this, like a famished wretch seeking food, I bounded forward, and seizing the flower, carried it with rapture to my lips, making such demonstrations of delight that must have shewn my charmer to what a degree I was entranced with love and adoration. It appeared that I was well understood, for a mutual exchange of glances and passionate looks took place between us during the evening, until the master of the feast, perceiving who were the occupants of the window, in well-feigned anger and astonishment, ordered them away. The maiden who had so suddenly enslaved my



heart, was no less a personage than the daughter of my wily host, who although he feigned ignorance, had in fact planned the whole scheme, whilst his cunning eye had watched the success which attended it. His object in fact was to marry me to his daughter, and thus, through her to secure my father in his favour, and I need not say how well he succeeded. From the moment I first saw her, I became entirely wild with love. I began to write verses, and to sing them—I was stupified with rapture—I grew thin and did not sleep—I succeeded in making known my state to my mistress, who on her side through an old woman, her confidant, informed me that she could not live without me, and thus day by day did we communicate until it was contrived that we should meet, under all the restraints of concealment and decorum so much insisted upon in the harem. The father all the while to keep up appearances with the world, was supposed to be ignorant of this proceeding, afforded every facility, and allowed nothing to impede the ardour of my passion.

I was at length introduced, with great precautions to the chamber of my beloved, when we both fainted from excess of joy; and there we sat, like two kernels in an almond, making protestations of the most ardent affection. I avowed my determination to ask my father's consent for an immediate marriage, swearing by Ali and the twelve Imams, that were he to deny my request, my heart would consume my liver into the ashes of despair. She, on her part, took gentle oaths that she would never marry any other, and that if she did not belong to me, she would take herself to the desert and the wilderness, and there wander alone and deserted among the fawns and the wild beasts, until she should die of grief and melancholy.

However, there was no necessity for so much romance. My father, who really loved me, seeing how much I was in earnest, gave his consent to our marriage, particularly when he heard that my bride brought a good dowry, and in the course of a short time a wedding was performed upon a scale of magnificence fitted to the occasion, much to the discomfiture

of my father-in-law's rival, who thus foresaw that the scale of my father's influence with the Shah would be turned against him.

I continued to be enamoured until the very night of our wedding, when my bride, having inflicted upon me a sound slap in the face for having ventured to sit upon my natural seat instead of my heels, I began to entertain doubts upon the existence of conjugal felicity. I date the beginning of my misfortunes from the occurrence of that concussion; day after day more specimens of her knowledge in that art were exhibited, until the conclusion which I was obliged to come to, concerning the quality of her temper, was final.

I owned that it was execrable, for I found that it gave way, on the smallest occasion of dissent to her wishes or her opinions. Whenever I ventured to complain, I soon repented—did I remonstrate in strains such as this—My eyes! this rice is too much boiled;—*paf*, I received a slap on the cheek. My soul, you have put too much paint on your eyes! oh me, a clutch at my beard! My lamb, sit more that way—five fingers into my face.

Such were the first pages of the history of my married life—such the first beginnings of what is called the blessed state of matrimony. I bore all with patience, hoping that as years advanced we should better understand each other, as a short legged man bestriding a fat steed, in the course of time fits the curvature of his legs to the rotundity of the horse's body ; but no—her smaller infirmities expanded into extensive vices.

Her beauty, which was unimpaired, and which in truth was dazzling, whilst it kept me in constant admiration, at the same time drove me into a current of jealousy and apprehension, for it became evident, from several indications, that she was determined to carry it to a much higher market than to that of the miserable wretch upon whom she had first bestowed it.

She had succeeded in acquiring great ascendancy in the harem of my father, having fascination at command, for with the same powers she had exercised to enslave me, she could attach others, although with different motives. My father was her devoted slave, so was my

mother, as well as the other women. Little by little she so entirely ingratiated herself that there was no intrigue to which she was not privy, and indeed, in which she did not shine as a leading character. She was not long in carrying about her own father's wishes, and had the satisfaction to see his rival by the Shah's own command delivered over into his hands, to be treated according as it should seem best to his tender mercies. Soon after she acquired a footing in the royal harem, and there she followed up her machinations with a vigour which made me tremble, for I was conscious of the power of her beauty, and were she to exercise it upon the Shah himself, which I knew was her object, I felt that the consequences might be fatal to my happiness. I might, indeed, have asserted the husband's authority in my own harem and used force to prevent her from leaving it, but what man was ever a match for a woman in cunning? I was not sufficiently excited with rage to administer poison—such an alternative more than once occurred in my mind, as most likely it had occupied the mind of the Shah, for she was wariness itself in all that passed

through her lips. At length what I so much dreaded came to pass. The Shah did see her—and alas! he saw her with the eyes and feelings that I so much apprehended. She soon informed me of this in triumph, the tigress! when worked up into a paroxysm of fury and jealousy, I could contain my anger no longer, I seized her by the tresses of her hair, and taking up my slipper, administered so severe a dose of beating, that she lay down apparently in lifeless agony. But this was only a feint, for no sooner had I quitted the room than she arose, and putting on her veil, straightway betook herself to the royal palace. I never saw her more in my own house, and from that time to this I have been an object of the most cruel persecution, hunted out from one corner to another until you see the sad result. Very soon after the commencement of our dissensions, my family began to feel the effect of her intrigues, for her wicked father soon brought on the ruin of mine, and before a year had elapsed, he had supplanted his benefactor in the Shah's good graces. As for me, everything that I

possessed was scattered to the four winds of heaven.

Under one pretext or another, I was constantly accused of crimes of which I was as innocent as a babe. I was bastinadoed for other people's thefts, beat on the mouth for other people's lies, tortured for fictitious heresies, and exiled for imaginary treason. I have been now an almost houseless wanderer for the last twenty years;—wherever I appear, I am known as the hopeless old man. As often as I attempt to raise myself in life, either by my own exertions or by the help of friends, so often am I found out and ruined. I have suffered every vicissitude, and tasted of every sort of misfortune, until I am now become a callous old beggar;—I should not be surprized at this very moment, now that I am enjoying the luxury of this shaded arch, and the advantage of some one to listen to my tale of woe, that something will occur to dash even this glimpse of enjoyment with bitterness.

And in truth, the old man had scarcely said this, before the sounds of mules and horses' foot-

steps were heard to pass over the bridge, accompanied by the cries of muleteers and other officers, altogether indicating the passage of a large cavalcade. As it wound into the road, Cossim and his companion remarked that it consisted of a takhteravan, or litter, richly decorated, surrounded by women on horseback, and preceded by eunuchs clearing the road.

They were evidently women belonging to the court. Of a sudden the takhteravan stopt, the doors of it were thrown open, and a woman of masculine and commanding appearance was seen within, who, in a loud querulous voice, pointing to the spot where Cossim and the old man sat, gave orders to the eunuchs to proceed thither. Without noticing Cossim, the old man was seized, and almost before he could utter a word, his feet were thrown into the air, and blows administered thereupon, as fast as four stout men could bestow them.

“Go, dog! till the end of time it will be thus!” exclaimed the fury, and there leaving the



poor wretch, groaning and writhing with pain, she ordered the cavalcade to proceed, and straightway disappeared.

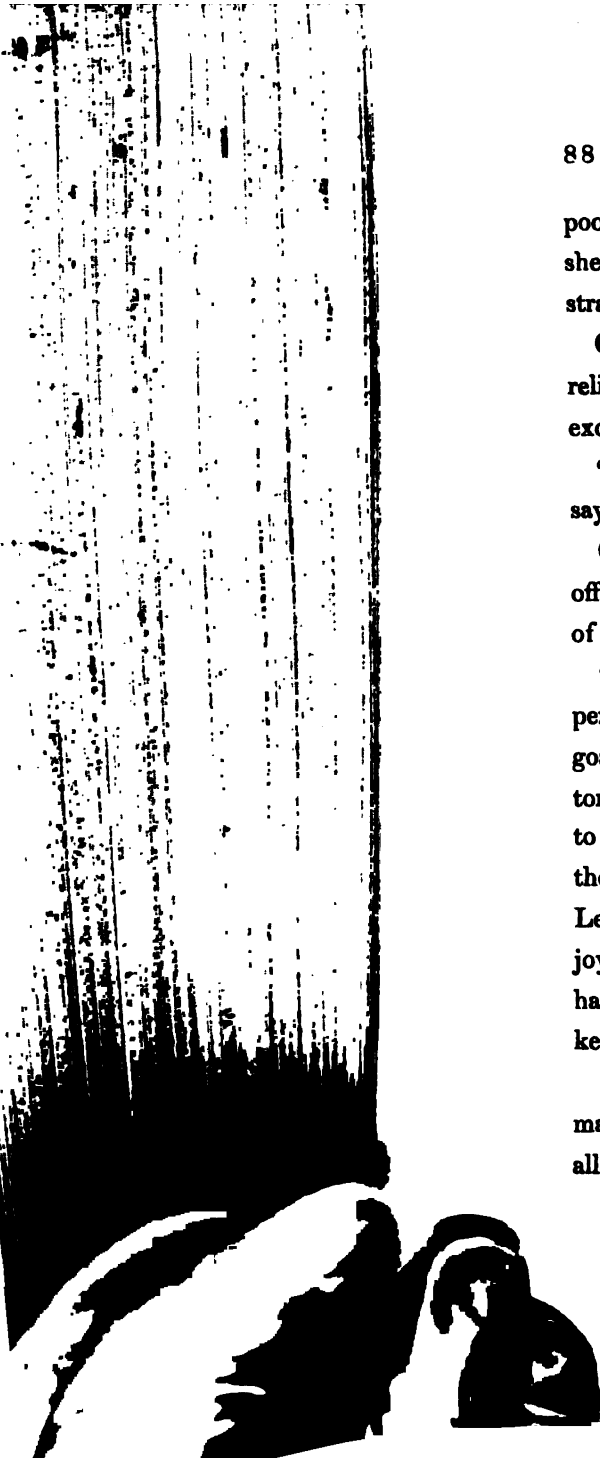
Cossim immediately went to the old man's relief, who, amidst the heavings of his pain, exclaimed :

“ Did you see ? That is my wife—did I not say true that I am a hopeless old man ? ”

Cossim endeavoured to console him, and offered his services to bear him to some place of shelter ; but he exclaimed :

“ No—leave me here—this has often happened. I suppose I am, in truth, the scape-goat of destiny. When it has nothing else to torment, it comes to me. So be it—praise be to Allah for all things. Let us hope that in the next world, I may live, and she grill. Leave me—leave me. I have had more enjoyment to-day through your means, than I have had for years—Allah take you into his keeping.”

Cossim walked away according to the old man's desire. He willingly would have staid to alleviate his suffering, although he was himself



in a hapless condition. The story sunk deep in his thoughts, for he too, in his earliest youth, had lived in a state of great delusion concerning the merits of womankind. 'Tis true he had not then seen the beautiful vision of the garden, but still is not every vain imagination a vision like that which had visited Cossim? He felt a chock to the expectations he had been cherishing, when he reflected upon the result to the passion which at first had engaged the old man's heart, and he argued thus with himself—" Might not this happen also to me?" But still the charming vision had taken too powerful a possession of his heart to permit him to discard it, therefore he continued to hope that the being in real life, of whom it was the prototype, would still be his.

He bent his steps towards the cemetery, on the banks of the Zainderood, determining to take up his quarters for the night in one of its many tombs. Day was drawing to a close, and the moon, in soothing stillness, rising behind the adjacent mountain,

gradually diffused its soft gleams over the landscape. Cossim walked on deep in thought, unmindful of surrounding objects, and slowly approached the most conspicuous monument, which having reached, to his surprize, he perceived something move. Immediately his heart beat with a quicker pulse, so much was he preoccupied with the expectation of a vision. What he beheld, however, was anything but supernatural. It was a second old man, who was seated quietly upon a tomb-stone close to the mausoleum, and who arose when he perceived Cossim. He was a venerable-looking personage, with a beard flowing to his girdle, and exhibited in his dress the appearance of a well-conditioned man of substance. Cossim accosted him with the usual salutation of peace, which was returned by the stranger without the least emotion, and after the first compliments had passed, they sat down together on a tomb.

“You are come out late,” said the old man—  
“sun-set has long been called from the mosque.”

“I am,” said Cossim; “the night is the

best time for such as I. I come to seek a refuge till the morning."

"You could not have sought a better than the tomb of Babarouk," said the other; "he was a wonderful Mollah."

"Was he?" said Cossim. "I care not whose tomb it is; I only want a roof over my head."

"Are you a Mussulman," said the stranger, "and know not who Babarouk was? He was a wonderful person, Babarouk. I too want a place of rest—but not for one night only—I want mine for ever."

"What words are these?" said Cossim, fearful lest he had met one seeking some dire extremity. "Do you wish to rid yourself of life?"

"This world is a bad world," said the old man; "but Babarouk is a good Mollah. I desire to go to heaven, if I can find a place of burial hereabouts for myself. See how many are buried here, who have sought the same advantage. I am weary of this life, but I want to be sure of a better."

"How is this?" inquired Cossim, strangely puzzled at the stranger's words.

"Thus it is," said the other—"at the last day, when Babarouk ascends to heaven, he will be sure to take me and this company here around, with him, if we can but lay hold of his skirts."

"And why, in the name of Allah," said Cossim, "do you wish to leave this world? you appear to be a man of substance, a man of accomplishment—one on good terms with fortune, not a poor wretch like me."

"*Ahi!* appearances are deceitful," said the stranger, "I may look all you say, but in fact, my soul is withered, and my liver dried up. I may still be an unhappy man, although my beard be well died, and a cashmere shawl be round my waist;—what words are these? And notwithstanding you seem to want proper clothing, and seek your bed in a tomb, still you may be the happier man of the two."

"As for me," said Cossim, "in point of worldly circumstances, a dog is better off; but thanks be to Allah, my mind is without

---

fear, and in full confidence I can exclaim, whatever is, so be it. But why are you without soundness of brain?"

"*Behy!*" exclaimed the stranger—"the story is a long one. A man without a home, for such I suppose you are, cannot comprehend the miseries endured by him who possesses a house mounted upon its fullest compliment. In two words let me tell you—I am dying of having four wives and being too much loved—that is my history."

"Marvellous!" said Cossim; "can a man be too much loved? I wonder how that can ever be? I have just seen a poor wretch who is the victim of too much hate; but how a misfortune can be created out of too much love I am still to learn. Do favour me by telling me your history. It will be long before the moon goes down, and you have plenty of time to satisfy my curiosity."

"There is no harm in what you require," said the old man. "I would willingly desert my home for ever, so much do I abhor returning thither."

He accordingly began as follows :

STORY OF THE SECOND OLD MAN, WHO  
WAS TOO MUCH LOVED.

My father was one of the richest merchants in Ispahan. He accumulated wealth during a long life, having traded successfully with India, Cashmere, Turkey, and Muscovy, and it was only late in life that he thought of solacing himself with a wife. I was the only child he ever possessed, and he died almost immediately after the celebration of my fifteenth birthday. He had been so discreet a possessor of wealth, that no one, in fact, knew the extent of his possessions, excepting an Abyssinian slave in whom he entirely confided; and this circumstance prevented the Shah and his officers from taking cognizance of his death, allowing me to enter into possession of my inheritance without

---

those acts of extortion usual on such occasions. The faithful negro, persisting in the same guarded conduct which had guided his master, allowed the secret of which he was the depositary, to remain undivulged until I had reached an age when I might direct my own affairs, and then only he informed me of the amount of my wealth. Placing at my disposal innumerable sacks of money, besides a great accumulation of jewels, all of which had been buried in the earth, he kissed my feet, and avowed that he was as much my slave as he had been my father's.

I was in the seventh heaven, and looked upon myself as the special favourite of fortune, for in addition to such advantages, I was a very handsome youth, so handsome that I was known by no other name than the handsome Hussein. I was well skilled in horsemanship, and so excellent a shot, that I could kill an antelope full gallop, from off my saddle; then I wrote a fine hand, made verses as well as Hafiz, and spoke like a professor of Arabic. So accomplished, so handsome, and so rich a man, could not fail



being much noticed, and accordingly I was universally courted, and when people saw me, they cried out *bah! bah! bah!* My father, who had lived quietly in our old family house, in the style of a common merchant, and his wife, was quite surprized when she heard of the wealth to which I was heir; and as soon as this circumstance was known in the city, you may be certain that she was very speedily beset by proposals of marriage for me. Khans and Mirzas, who before this intelligence was known, would scarcely have smoked from the same kalian as my father, now came to visit me, making professions of friendship, and it was soon intimated from high authority, that I had only to speak, and I should be invested with some post of honour and authority at court. I will not say how I behaved on this occasion, but perhaps, I might blush for having indulged in much vanity and in no little presumption.

With one hand on my money-bags, and with the other holding a looking-glass to my face, thus feeling that I was both richer and handsomer,

somer than other men, I determined to be courted for myself alone, and resolved to make a figure in the country. I sought the finest horses, wherewith to stock my stables, ordered gold-enamelled pipe-heads, silver ewers and basins, golden trays and inlaid drinking-cups. My wardrobe was composed of the finest stuffs and furs, and I seriously began to think of securing a wife, as preparatory to an accumulation of wives, and all the grandeur and circumstance of a magnificent harem.

My faithful negro slave, who had witnessed the labour, the anxiety, and the thrift with which my poor father had collected his wealth, groaning when he perceived how easily it vanished from under my hands, was glad to hear me talk of a wife, for he deemed marriage a sober act. He wished to see me united to the daughter of some rich and careful trader, who being aware of the value of money, might look with circumspection after my property ; but I was bent upon making a great alliance, and it was not long before I secured to myself the

daughter of the Shah's principal master of ceremonies, a great Seffevean lord, and of considerable influence at court.

A magnificent entertainment was given on the occasion, in which I displayed such dazzling wealth, that every one exclaimed that the fortunes of Hatem Tai were restored. I was so handsome myself, that I scarcely took notice of the lady who was brought to me as a wife ; and as I was quite certain that she could not abstain from loving me to distraction, I did not take much trouble to discover what might be the nature of her disposition or her temper. However, although she did love me in a manner that no man was ever loved before, there were parts of her conduct which might as well have been omitted.

During our moments of domestic intercourse she would insist upon my adhering more strictly than I was wont to do, to the formal etiquette, of which her noble father was a professor, and of which she avowed herself to be the complete mistress ; and she required that I, as the least noble of the two, should

submit to the humiliation of standing before her until she should order me to sit. To this I refused, asserting that having selected her out of hundreds who solicited my hand, that all the riches being on my side, and that I, being the handsomest man at court, it was absurd in her to put forward pretensions so utterly untenable. Upon this subject we were always at variance, and although she would avow her love in a manner which convinced me, that adherence to etiquette was only a consequence of her defective education, and did not essentially destroy her devotion to my person, still it was repugnant to my feelings every day to hear that I was meanly born, and, therefore, in the course of a short time, I determined upon taking to myself a second wife, before whom I might sit or stand just as it should seem best to myself, and who would love me entirely for the beauty of my person, my excellence and accomplishments.

Preserving the greatest secrecy towards my first wife, I soon succeeded in obtaining a second, the daughter of a merchant, recom-

mended to me by my faithful negro, who still enjoyed my confidence whenever his services were necessary. This was a tender creature, apparently of the most pliant, docile, and caressing temper. She really did love me—she told me so a thousand times a day. She watched over all my interests with the fidelity and vigilance of a house-dog—superintended my food and made my sweet-meats, and devoted herself so earnestly to embroidering scull-caps, that I really thought no man was so much beloved. In her society, I entirely forgot my first wife, whom I left in enjoyment of her etiquettes, and who I hoped would feel how foolishly she had acted in rendering me the victim of her ceremonious tastes.

But I had ill calculated upon her forbearance for when she heard of the arrival of the intruder, passions arose of which I could scarcely believe the existence, particularly when I was convinced that, happen what might, I should still be intensely beloved. The daughter of the master of ceremonies no sooner heard of the arrival of the daughter of the merchant a

co-wife and co-aspirer to my affections, than she beset my path with every possible annoyance, and having at length succeeded in making me stand before her, forgetful of every etiquette, and in contempt of all decorum, she flung herself upon me, and what with clutches at my beard, blows from her slipper, and expectorations on my face, she made me doubtful of the extent of that love with which I thought to have inspired her.

She then proceeded to the apartment of my new wife, and there she again shewed much contempt for etiquette, by breaking whatever came in her way, kalians, water-basins, drinking-cups, until she was arrested in her career by the demeanour of her rival, who, throwing off that pliant, docile, and caressing temper which had so much enslaved me, shewed herself to the full as pugnacious as her rival. I know not what might have been the result had these furies been left to themselves, but their respective women having come to a rescue, they drew them off each to their respective apart-

ments, whilst I was left to myself like a rose torn to pieces by a pair of enraged *bulbuls*.

Thus situated, I began to consider what ought to be done. To face my first wife in her present state of excitement, was out of the question—it required the courage of a lion so to do; therefore, I had recourse to my second, of whose love I felt secure, although I had discovered that she too, was not the lamb she had at first taken her to be. I found her seated, 'tis true, embroidering a scull-cap, but new passions had arisen in her breast, and instead of devotion to me, she now breathed nothing but vengeance against her enemy.

“Allah! Allah!” she exclaimed, “what ashes are fallen upon our heads? You would not be counted amongst men if you allow such things to take place in your house—I, poor shameface that I am, here I was seated, with my needle in my hand, and my head bent in thought, embroidering, when, by your so-called thought, the woman came in with the noise of thunder, and without saying peace be with you! in an instant began to break everything that came in her way.”

under her hand. Although my heart be humble, yet, after all, I am a woman and a living creature—I stood up and with that tongue which God has given me I said, “You, who are you?”

“‘I, who am I!’ said she, ‘I will tell you who I am—I am not the daughter of a worn out shop-keeper—I am not a miserable second-hand wife—I am somebody—my father is some one—the King himself knows me—I will not be fobbed off with a husband who loves some one else. What business have you here, you low-bred, ill-born, buying and selling creature?’

“‘What business have I here?’ said I; ‘as much as you—I am your equal—I am the wife of the handsome Hussein.’”

“‘Are you?’ said she. ‘Take that!’ upon which she opened her fingers, and struck me with her open hand. I could not do less, and as Allah is great, I became a lioness, and I did things. Now, if you love me, you must do something too. Man, after all, is man; and should you allow such violence to take place without retorting it, who knows what may happen?’”

I endeavoured to suppress her violence



and to recall her thoughts to her domestic duties; but I did not succeed, for her former pacific nature seemed entirely to have changed, and she only breathed hostility. She insisted upon my performing some desperate act of violence upon my first wife. Poisoning was too good—bastinado too mild; she required nothing less than stifling. In short, she demanded the death of her rival. At such a request, my heart turned back upon itself, for the offender belonged to a powerful family; her father possessed the ear of the Shah and his ministers; and too happy would they have been, to acquire a good pretext for levying heavy fines upon me, or, perhaps, totally despoiling me of my fortune.

I, therefore, was slow in agreeing to the solicitations of the merchant's daughter and became puzzled what to do. Her love for me was now entirely swallowed up in her hatred for her enemy, and I began to fear that neither my beauty nor my riches would ever bring it back again.

I allowed things to take their course for

some time, during which I led a life of incessant trouble. I became less than a dog. I felt that I ought to be loved, for in my person I possessed all that was requisite; but the love that was my due was swallowed up in hatred.

In this state of uncertainty, I was roused by a message from the grand vizier, that his Majesty the Shah, in consequence of the station which I held in the world, and of the great esteem in which he held me, had deigned to bestow upon me one of the ladies of his harem, and I was ordered immediately to take her to wife. What shall I say? At this piece of intelligence my heart swelled to suffocation, and putting my forefinger into my mouth, I exclaimed, "Allah, there is but one Allah! Refuge in God! how much more am I destined to be beloved? Women come upon me thicker than caterpillars—pity, pity! Oh, those women—those women!"

However, there was no help for my situation. I was obliged to obey, or lose my head; and whether I would or not, I exclaimed: "Upon my eyes be it! Whatever be the com-

mands of the centre of the Universe, they are a law to his slave !”

After some reflection, it occurred to me, that as there are always two sides of a question, it might turn out that this new event might have its bright side as well as its dark. My home could not be more ruined than it was ; and perhaps this King’s wife, by her presence, might subdue the wild passions of the two other women.

And so, indeed, it turned out. The disputants, upon hearing the new event, ceased hostilities. The name of a King’s Banou awed them into respect, and for a while I enjoyed some rest, although I perceived that I should have much to endure from the airs which this lady gave herself upon her arrival.

Although she had long passed the years of youth, yet she behaved as if she and the roses had the world in common together. When she came to me, she still smarted under the mortification of having been dismissed from sitting under the shade of the royal eyebrow, therefore her temper was not like sugar. Al-

though my house was as magnificent as a house could be, and the apartments allotted to her quite unexceptionable, yet she did nothing but remind me of the luxuries she had left, and of the honour which she did me, of putting up with my abominations.

I bore all with great patience, and was thankful to Allah, that, through her means, I enjoyed some respite from the storms of fury which I had before endured, when, for my ill-luck, all at once the Banou, as she was called, took to loving me. She made the most violent demonstrations, and showed her love in so many tormenting ways, that I began to bewail the destiny which had made me the handsomest of men. Her jealousy rose to such frantic excess, that she never allowed me to be out of her sight for a moment; and when I ventured to bend my steps towards the apartments of either my first, or my second wife, she was ready to run wild with rage and despair.

I led this sort of life for a considerable time. My harem was celebrated for being the most

litigious and noisy in the city; and I was noted for being the most beloved, as well as the most miserable of mortals.

As I receded from youth, and old age approached, I determined to try my chance once more, whether I could not meet with some good creature, who would devote her life to make me happy. Instead of seeking one who belonged to a family of consequence, I instituted a search among the daughters of country people, and soon secured a damsel from one of the wandering tribes, with the chief of whom I had some dealings. For this purpose, I made a pretext to perform a journey into the southern parts of Persia, and there the ceremony was performed.

I passed some months with my new wife, in perfect happiness and tranquillity; and would have stayed away for ever, from my quarrelsome harem, had I been able. But pressing affairs drew me thither, and putting a brave face upon my late achievement, I returned to Ispahan with my plebeian wife.

Allah! Allah! as soon as it was known

that a fourth\* was to be added to the harem, the news acted like a shell falling into the centre of a powder magazine. Each of my three first wives received me with open claws, and unloosed tongues. As for the poor innocent cause of their rage, I verily believe that three different potions of poison were prepared for her on the very night of her arrival; and had it not been for her own sagacity, which warned her of the danger, she could not have lived an hour after she had entered the walls of my house.

I am now entirely hopeless of ever passing a quiet moment again in this life. It is only this very day, upon returning home after my visit to the King's gate, that news was brought to me, that, after a long series of attempts, which had been warded off by the skill and sagacity of the parties, my first wife had succeeded in poisoning my second wife; and my second wife, strange to say, had seized, also, that very moment to poison my first wife; and there they both lie, in their

\* Four wives are allowed by the laws of Mohammed.

respective apartments in the agonies of death. Such a scene of wailing and lamentation as is now taking place, was never before witnessed, and I have retreated from it in order to obtain a few hours' quiet, and meditate on what I hope may soon be my lot to endure, namely, a speedy departure from this world of care. I seek a spot where I may rest in peace, and stand a chance of going to heaven, whenever the Saint who reposes here shall ascend thither.

The old man having ceased to speak, a long silence ensued. Cossim was seriously impressed with what he heard; his beautiful visage was contemplated with different feelings; and he secretly breathed this question to himself: "Can it be possible that all women are alike?" He dwelt long and painfully upon this thought until he was startled by the voice of his companion, who said:

"Come, come with me to my house. You shall sleep there instead of this place. We will sup together. My dwelling is at hand, and you shall, in some manner, judge for yourself of the truth of what I have related."

Cossim mechanically followed him, and, after walking some distance, they reached a handsome entrance, through which they passed into a large court-yard, laid out in flower-beds, and fountains; but instead of the usual quiet of a Mussulman's residence, the sounds of women's shrieks and lamentations struck his ears, mingled with voices that seemed to express upbraidings and anger.

"Those are my wives," said the old man, shrugging up his shoulders. "They are a degree less violent to-night than ordinary. We may, perhaps, get some supper in comparative peace."

Cossim followed him into a room, handsomely furnished with fine carpets; and after they had sat some time, a train of servants brought in trays, with a good supper, followed by kalians and coffee.

But all the entertainments in the world could not arouse the drooping spirits of the youth, who, in the odious cries which assailed his ears, contemplated what his own fate might be. He said nothing, but bewailing the situation of



his host, determined, the first moment he could do so with propriety, to escape from so utterly hateful and unattractive a roof.

The supper being over, he was conducted to a chamber, where he lay down with the intention of sleeping; but he could not sleep fled his eyelids. He could think of nothing but the stories he had recently heard each confirming the other, and leading him to fear that women and misery were synonymous terms.

Ere the day had dawned, he arose, washed himself, and having said his morning prayers he bade adieu to his friend, and bent his step towards the mountains, not knowing precisely which road to take. Undesignedly, he fell into the path which led to that part of the range where he had performed his first act of penance. As he proceeded onwards, coming to a sharp angle of rock, suddenly, at some little distance, he perceived a female form gliding on before him. To his breathless surprise, it proved the very same bewitching form he had seen when he lay extended in the

garden of Irem ; and, although but a moment before he had come to the resolution never to risk his happiness by dealings with woman-kind, yet no resolution was proof against the fascination before him. He hurried on, in the hope of overtaking her ; but the faster he walked, the faster she preceded him, until, at length, after much toil, he succeeded in reaching the very spot he had formerly occupied.

He now concluded that he should certainly obtain an interview, for he perceived that she had entered the cavern, having caught a glimpse of her white robe, as she turned into its first winding. He hastily ran thither, when, to his utter surprize, the figure turned sharply round, and disclosed to his longing eyes, not the beautiful face and endearing expression of the lovely vision which had so long filled his thoughts, but the very old woman, jin or peri who had received him in the cavern, in Arabia. As soon as he perceived her, he fell at her feet, and exclaimed :

“ I am your slave !—deal with me as it seems

best to you, but explain the mysteries which have beguiled me. Where is the lovely that I have been following?"

"Cossim," exclaimed the old woman, voice full of sweetness and encouragement, "open your eyes and give ear to my words. You have lived hitherto in a state of illusion—break the spell. That figure was a deception—the truth you see in me; look then to observe the things of the world in their proper light—dare to see the truth—the nearer you can approach to it, the greater will be your happiness. Let this be the last lesson you will receive, and instead of groping in a mist, you will for the future live in sunshine. Go and prosper—the world is before you."

With these words she disappeared, and Cossim was again left to himself, but so renewed in mind and vigour, that it appeared to him he had just awoke from a dream. He straightway bent his steps to the city, and when he had reached the suburbs, he was met by two men who accosting him, invited

to sit and refresh himself, and to whom he related the whole of his strange adventures. This encounter was the cause of his future prosperity. It was the Shah himself in disguise to whom he had disclosed his story, and who, being struck by his manner and the extraordinary things he had related, took him into favour. He soon became a man of consequence ; his abilities shone forth in every thing he did, for this simple reason, that he saw things in their proper light—above all, in the conduct of his own affairs ; he took care in marriage to select a wife principally for her good qualities, and moreover, never to marry more than one at a time.

---

Here my friend ceased to speak, and we soon entered into conversation upon the story he had related. I approved of it, for more reasons than one, and recommended him strongly to relate it to the Shah, having observed that it ended in a compliment as well as a hint, that Kings ought to seize every

opportunity of seeking and rewarding merit. To this he fully agreed. But what I more particularly remarked, was, that this story partook, in fact, from beginning to end, more of the parable, than of a common tale of mere amusement. "Yes," said the Mirza, "true you have observed, we men of Persia are apt to express ourselves in parables. The Shah often exercises his wit in them, although, in truth, if he cannot speak plain, what man in his dominions can? Our wise men deeming it unworthy to express themselves like people in the bazaar, are ever racking their brains for a happy similitude—and, indeed, why undergo the labour we do to learn our poets by heart or to write poetry ourselves, but that in our common discourse we may illustrate our ideas by quotations and happy allusions?"

"Then let me ask," said I, "what gave rise in your mind to the story just related? There is nothing in it to excite either strong emotion, or great interest. You must have had some ulterior object in view."

"You do not say wrong," said the Mirza.

“ Your slave had an object in view, and the occasion which gave rise to it is as follows: The day before his Majesty began his course of spring medicines, he called together an assembly of his principal wise men, his physician-in-chief, his head Mollah, a Suffi-doctor, his head astrologer, and one or two others who study science and court wisdom, and he was pleased also to superadd your humble servant. The discourse fell upon the nature of man, his attributes, his power of bringing himself to perfection, and upon the gradations of intellect and physical advantages that exist in men in general. The flatterers soon made it their principal object to shew that the infinite variety of qualities which exist in men, are imperceptibly graduated by various degrees of perfection until they reach their highest point, namely, Kings, beyond which any further degree of perfectibility they asserted is hopeless. “ ‘ See the negro,’ said the physician; ‘ he is the lowest in the scale of beings, (excepting perhaps the Jew, interrupted the Mollah) his intellect is more like that of a beast than anything in the shape of man ;—it is doubtful whether he

has a soul—he scarcely observes the decencies of nature; he is, therefore, a slave to all Mahomedans; his duty is made on purpose to receive the blows, to prepare him in preference to any other man to be the guardian of our women; his strength he be generally strong in person, but his strength is useless, until we teach him how to wield it. Then see the broken, emaciated poor wretch from India—behold his frame, his women's bones, his spirit—what can he do in the sea? His intellect is sharper than that of the European, although his colour is the same; he writes, and casts accounts—he makes gold and makes fine stuffs, but a little better than a woman.'

“ ‘But do you say nothing of the Mollah?’ remarked the Mollah, ‘the most civilized of the human race.’

“ ‘True,’ said the doctor, ‘but they have no law, a written law, and degraded by their customs, they have Abraham and Moses for their ancestors. They are, 'tis true, in the eyes of God's creatures, the lowest of

they are the leprosy of creation. They are a degree above dogs. We kill a Jew, and say no blood is spilt. They are the abandoned of Allah. Who cares for a Jew more or less? If we want money, we send a Jew to earn it, to steal or cheat, and then we take it from him—that is all they are good for; but they have intellect—that we must allow them, perverted though it be; therefore they must class before negroes and Hindoos.’

“‘But what say you of Franks?’ remarked the Suffi doctor. ‘Franks have intellect over and above. See, wherefore do they come to Persia?—they know where to seek countries better than their own. Ah, the unsainted dogs, they know where the sun shines, they can find that out, they themselves being the slaves of darkness—livers in clouds, and children of smoke.’

“‘The whole family of Franks are unclean,’ said the physician, shaking the lappel of his cloak and blowing over each shoulder. ‘*Ahi!* the unclean progeny! Allah Allah! whither shall we run from their contaminations? They drink wine, and say praise be to Allah;—they



eat of swine, the filthy beasts about for joy, exclaim—good! each other in full greediness wash the right hand, bath on the same to them, they are ignorant; their women shew their faces to choose to gaze, and leer, and loathe to reside in the same apartments as the men, wear straw mats on their heads, and cover their teeth and mouths with tobacco and other unclean beasts. They without Allah, are never seen to pray, they have priests, their priests gaze at women, and, it is said, they are more wicked than the others. O the unblest generation! a shade above Jews, for, in truth they deny they are men, and strove for fighting; but they are, perhaps, removed from perfection of any religion.

“ ‘Excepting the Moscovites,’  
‘who are still further removed  
degree lower in the scale than the

“ ‘True you say,’ said the  
Allah! can those white heads,

sculls, eyes of the wild hog, and odour of the hyæna, be classed among human beings?’

“‘There is one thing,’ said his Majesty, who, wrapped up in a heavy fur pelisse, (being his sick costume,) had listened to the discussions of his wise men, ‘there is one thing you have forgotten. You say that Franks and Moscovs are men and human creatures; but one of the attributes common to all mortals, they have not—I mean fear—they have no fear;—they advance in spite of every thing, invading, seizing, taking possession without fear. They attack a whole nation—recollect what is a whole nation—they, a handful of men, they come from their own countries, which are situated Allah knows where, to attack a new and a whole nation, and what is more, take it and make it part of their own. Now these cannot be men; they are either more or less than men. We, Persians, who are the most perfect of the species, the privileged of Allah, we have never done anything of the kind; we know what fear is—it is an attribute of man, and a very wholesome one

too ; we never think of appropriating a whole nation, like these Franks.'

“ ‘As I am your slave,’ said the astrologer in chief, ‘whatever the Asylum of the Universe has commanded, is true. The words of Majesty are words of wisdom. Whose dog was Aflatoon, compared to our King of Kings, and may Noushirvan be humbled to the dust before our Centre of the World ; but your slave begs leave to represent, that the want of perfection in Franks, and, indeed, in all men who are not Persians, is their incredulity in regard to astrology. One hour with them is as good as another. What care they for the stars, the low-born ! They are totally insensible to what the planets may be about, and will as soon attack a kingdom, without the permission of an astrologer, as they would eat a water melon. Can such beings be classed among men ? Happy Persia ! that possesses wise men among her children, who can guide her people to act according to rule ; to eat, drink, sleep, take journeys, medicine, and wives, according as the planets above may ordain, and above all possesses a King—a King of Kings, whose

wisdom is so pre-eminent, that he knows how to cherish wisdom and its professors, and adopt its ordinances, thus becoming a shining example to his subjects.'

" 'Bah ! bah ! bah !' we all exclaimed, upon hearing these words, and we perceived that the Shah was pleased.

" 'But Turks ! What shall we say of Turks ?' exclaimed the man of many drugs, taking up the thread of his discourse. 'They take the precedence of Franks, according to our most approved theories. They acknowledge the holy prophet, they worship one Allah, and are true believers. They only eat dirt in some few particulars, and that they do most plentifully.'

" 'Curse Omar ! Curse those who approve of Omar. Maledictions on all Turks !' was slowly growled forth by all the assembly present.

" 'Yes, they are allowed a place among men, infidels though they be to the orthodox faith. Their beards are only fit for brooms to our dust-holes. Their *shalwars*,\* are only bags to carry filth in ; but still they class above

\* Large trousers.

Franks, and joy go with them, for they are beasts of beasts.'

"When we had well expended our national animosities against the Turks, the doctor then broke out into rapturous exclamations in favour of ourselves—*we*, the Persians. Looking towards the Shah, as seeking the approbation of his countenance, he said,

"If wit and intellect be required, where are they to be found if not in Persia? What country ever possessed such poets, such historians, such philosophers? Seek you beauty of person, what men are like the men of Iran? Seek you for sagacity as statesmen, see what a station Persia holds in the world! Do you want every quality combined, wit, beauty, sagacity, and valour, look to our own King of Kings!"

"Upon this, there was a general exclamation of approbation, and we lauded the Shah until he stopped us in his wisdom, by saying, *bus, bus*, enough, enough, and then spoke as follows, addressing his physician-in-chief:

"You have spoken long and well; but still, considering the advantages that Persia really possesses over all the nations of the world, you have not convinced me that life at best, in its most

brilliant colours and under its most favourable aspect, is worth the possession beyond the period of youth and enjoyment. Its pleasures are short, its miseries numerous. I, who have enjoyed a long reign, who have possessed all that the heart of man or King could desire, am quite of the same opinion as the famous Jemsheed, the founder of our monarchy, who, in answer to a flatterer, said,

King tho' I am, yet evil are my days ;  
The largest torch creates the largest blaze.  
Of what is life composed that's worth the thinking ?  
What care I for the land, if I be sinking ?

“ It was upon these words, which fell from his Majesty,” added my friend, the Mirza, “ that I founded the story which I have just related, for I wished to shew that life, in order to be bearable, must have its vicissitudes ; like the sea, if not disturbed and agitated by storms, would become stagnant and putrify.”

I congratulated him upon his success, but at the same time said, I could not do the same to his countrymen, upon the knowledge which they had displayed of Europeans and

Franks in general. He laughed, and exclaimed,

“Double dotted asses ! In giving you a specimen of conversation among ourselves, I have informed you of the extent of their knowledge. Such we are, boasters ! Ignorance and pride, ever go together. Tell them of a useful invention, making of cloth for instance, they reject it and say, ‘ Our fathers did without it, and, therefore, why should we require it ? ’ Then say after this what hope is there for such a people ? ”

My friend was, indeed, an enlightened man, compared to the mass of his countrymen. But how could he rear his solitary voice against despotism fed by ignorance and still hope to produce effect ? We parted with a renewal of friendly expressions.

## VISIT VII.

SINCE my last visit to the Mirza, his Majesty the Shah had quitted his palace at Tehran, and transferred himself and his court, with a detachment of his harem to Sultanieh. On a mound conspicuous in the vast plain, stands a small summer palace, consisting of a large hall supported by pillars, and a set of chambers, appropriated to the ladies' and to the King's retiring apartments. Surrounding the mound was spread, far as the eye could reach, the royal camp, in which was collected an army, efficient in its various departments, but only intended as a precautionary demonstration, being a force indicative of the power of Persia, which, like a sword in its scabbard hanging upon the war-



rior's thigh, was known to be ready for service, though its power was dormant and its sharpness hidden. Immediately adjacent to the palace, were the pavilions of the viziers, courtiers, and the great officers of state, among which was that of my friend.

Having followed the embassy of which I was a member, to the camp, after fulfilling the visits of ceremony to the Shah and his ministers, I immediately sought the Mirza in his abode, and found him more engrossed by poetry and the pleasures of imagination than ever. We both agreed that nothing can be more invigorating to the mind, renewing its faculties, and refreshing to its energies, than being transferred from the walls of a house and a city to the expanse of the open country, where hill and plain, rock and verdure, sterility and vegetation, are spread abroad for reflection and meditation. My friend's mind broke forth into rapturous poetry, and, although I am no enemy to the muses, yet, in good truth, I must own it required a great effort of friendship to restrain myself from longing that his effusions might be of shorter duration. Having, how-

ever, allowed him all the self-denial that I could spare, I gradually brought him to matter of fact, and he informed me that, after permitting his thoughts to soar into the sublimities of poetry, he found it difficult to descend to the composition of a tale of real life. Extending his hand towards me with animation, his eye at the same time "in a fine frenzy rolling," he exclaimed :

"Is it not an important proof of the progress of the mind towards perfection, this impatience at the pressure of worldly matters, when it longs to be left entirely to the enjoyment of things spiritual?"

He then exclaimed :

"My friend, hear these lines :

That veil which screens yon female form and mien,  
Tells me that charms are hid—and wherefore hide?  
But greater far the charm—the bliss how keen,  
When from my soul this veil of flesh shall glide."

I must own I could not help contemplating this man of genius with some commiseration, and deploring that he belonged to an Asiatic community rather than to ours, where he

would have been better appreciated, and where his genius, unshackled by the terrors of despotism, would have acquired an unlimited range over the regions of imagination, enlightened by education, and set at ease by liberty ; still I could not refrain from expressing my admiration of his powers. He then told me, that on the journey from Tehran to Sultanieh, the Shah had not once called upon him to keep him awake, but that he expected shortly to be invited to amuse him, for the chase had not been prosperous, game not being plentiful this year in the environs of Sultanieh ;—his Majesty, moreover, was beginning to exhibit symptoms of old age and love of tranquil pleasures. The Mirza informed me, that he had, at present, expended all his invention in submitting to the fascinations of poetry, and therefore, had had recourse to a book of Turkish tales, which the secretary of the ambassador from the Porte had lent him, and from which he had extracted materials for a narrative which he intended, next time he was called upon, to submit to his Majesty.

“ It is a story,” said he, “ which, perhaps,

may act beneficially upon his Majesty's pursuits, which, to say the truth, are too much absorbed by his love of the fair sex, for it relates the adventures of one of the worst of that species, and may, perhaps, tend to act as a corrective."

"Ah," said I, "the subject is a curious one ; in the name of Allah, let us hear."

"Sit," said he, "extend your legs—no ceremony—give ear, and if you love me, tell me whether you think I may venture to be so bold."

Upon which he spoke as follows :

---

#### HISTORY OF YELDEZ, THE INEVITABLE.

There was once a young man of the name of Selim, one of the true faith, who lived at Scutari, a town on the sea-coast, directly opposite to the palace of the blood-drinker, the emperor of Constantinople. He was the only child of a negress, who had been the slave of a rich Turk,

a merchant, who being a benevolent man, had bequeathed her liberty at his death, on account of her fidelity to him, and had left her sufficient money to enable her to pass the rest of her days out of the reach of want.

Selim was a youth full of good qualities; he was very careful of his mother, and laboured hard to make her comfortable. His complexion denoted his origin, for although his father was a fair Turk, yet destiny played him false in making him quite dark, and by way of stamping him an undoubted son of Ethiopia, had covered his head with wool instead of hair. The very small house inhabited by his mother being close to the sea, Selim had early imbibed a taste for nautical pursuits, and having been allowed to handle an oar in the boats which plied for custom between Scutari and Constantinople, he had become an expert waterman by the time he was eighteen years old. His mother, who doated upon him, having, by dint of intense saving, scraped up enough to buy him a caique, with its oars, mast, and sail, he was overjoyed one fine day to find himself installed as a regular waterman at the quay at Scutari,

in a pretty boat, and what was much to his credit, enjoying the good will and protection of some of the older watermen who plied at the same place. There he was to be seen, from the earliest dawn to sunset, crying out *Stambol, Stambol* at the height of his voice, like an old established boatman, continuing his vocation even after the Muezzins on the mosques had chaunted the call to evening prayers. Selim also knew when and where to seek for fares; he was acquainted with the times of arrival of the great passage boats from the Prince's Islands, from Mudania and the coast of Asia, also with the nature of the winds, when one particular wind would waft ships from the straits of Gallipoli and the Dardanelles, and when another would bring them in from the Black Sea. Thus intelligent and thus active, Selim and his boat prospered to his heart's content, and as he laid the daily amount of his gains in the whity-brown palm of his revered parent, he felt himself fully repaid by hearing her exclaim, "O, my son, may Allah give you plenty in return," to which he never failed to say, "Inshallah!"

It came to pass, that 'a long course of the Tramontane wind had prevented ships arriving from the Dardanelles, and Selim watched with anxiety for a change, in order that he might gain some employment. Just as he was retiring for the night, after he had properly disposed of his boat, he remarked that a change would take place before morning. Accordingly, he determined to be at the seraglio point before break of day, in order to be ready for whatever might happen. Having supped, as usual, with his mother, he informed her of his intention; and, accordingly, being refreshed by a sound sleep, before the dawn, when it was still dark, he found himself among the rocks, close to the extremity of the Sultan's seraglio.

He was just about to fasten his boat to one of the rocks, in order to keep himself clear of the current, when he perceived a secret door in the wall open suddenly, from whence two men issued, bearing a sack. This they threw into the sea with a heavy splash, and then as suddenly disappeared.

Selim was at first seized with a convulsive

thrill of horror ; but seeing the sack float by him in the current, and perceiving something alive within, making great struggles for life, he rapidly threw himself on the side of his boat, and seizing it as it passed, dragged it with all his force within. He hastened to rip it open, which he did with the knife usually carried in the girdle, and having so done, he discovered that it contained, what indeed he expected to see, namely, a woman. He pulled his boat from the shore with all his might, without more observing his prize, than to perceive that she was still alive, and having reached the mid channel, he stopped, allowed his oars to hang to their pegs, and then bent over to take a closer survey. Finding himself free from observation, he placed his hand on her head, for her face was downwards, and gradually lifting her up, his eyes fell upon a form so graceful, and features so surprisingly beautiful, that, accustomed as he was to see no woman's face but that of his sable mother's, he scarcely could breathe from excess of surprize and admiration. Her eyes were closed ; her face wore the ghastly hue of one drowned ; but she



breathed and there was no doubt of her being alive. He took to his oars again, and pulled with all his might, hoping to reach his mother's dwelling before the day had entirely broke. In this he succeeded; and having ran his boat up high and dry on the beach, he immediately informed his mother of what had taken place, and requested her not to lose a moment in helping him to conduct the unfortunate woman to the house.

The negress was singularly kind hearted, and, without reflecting upon the consequences, she at once lent herself to the benevolent feeling which impelled her son, ran to the boat, and, by dint of great exertion, they at length managed to conduct the object of their care to their habitation, where they laid her on a bed, and afforded her such help as was in their power. Selim then left her to the care of his mother, who, having divested her of her wet clothes, replaced them by some of her own—poor substitutes, indeed, in point of finery, but though coarse, dry and wholesome.

“Wonderful, wonderful!” exclaimed the

negress, as she examined the various articles of dress, holding them up before her eyes, dripping wet. "Velvet, O, my soul!" she said, as she held up the vest. "Silk, as I am a negress!" she exclaimed, when she inspected the ample drawers. "Gauze and embroidery, by the soul of the prophet!" when she held up the chemise; and casting her eyes upon their beautiful owner, who was extended, in a scarcely animate state, upon her humble bed, she said :

"See what destiny will do. Better to be black and safe like me, than beautiful, and fit for drowning, like this poor thing. Allah is great! Allah is merciful! Had it not been for Selim, the fishes would have eaten her up. As it is, the fishes will owe Selim a grudge, and she will be grateful. Wonderful thing is *kismet!*"

She thus continued to moralize and speculate, as she hung up the wet clothes to dry, every now and then lending her ear to where the sufferer was reposing, in the hope that she might hear her speak, or give some sign of life.

At length she heard a groan, which made her run in haste to the bed side.

“What is it, *guzum*, my eyes,” said the kind hearted negress. “Speak, I am here.”

Upon this succeeded another groan, accompanied by a long drawn sigh, which was followed by the opening of the eyes.

“Speak,” said Selim’s mother: “fear nothing. Allah is great! and I am here.”

“Where am I?” said the sufferer. “Where have I been? What place is this?”

“This is the house of the negress Rosebud, Selim’s mother; fear not—we are friends, and we have saved you.”

“Who is Rosebud? Who is Selim?” said the reviving woman. “Allah! O, Allah! where am I?”

“By the mercy of Allah,” said Rosebud, “you have been saved from drowning by my son, Selim. You were thrown into the sea in a sack, and he picked you up. I have said *Shukriur Allah!* thanks to Allah! several times, and I say so again. I recommend you to say so too, for it is impossible to guess what may happen if you do not.”

The fair one gently sighed out, "*Shukiur Allah !*" and, as she slowly raised up her head, and looked around, she inquired :

" Who is Selim ?"

" He is my son," said the fond mother.

" He is the best of sons, and a waterman. He gives up his soul for me. He does not cease rowing, day and night ; and he brings me money, and I say : " May plenty return to you, Oh, my son ! He it was who saved you."

" But whose coarse things are these that I wear ?" said the fair one, whom, for the future, we must call Yeldez, or the star, and who surveyed herself with an unutterable look of dismay. " Who clothed me thus ?"

" Who but me ; oh, my eyes !" said the negress.

" I dressed you, I took off your wet clothes, I wiped you down, I lifted you from the boat to the bed, I wrung out the sea water from your clothes, and hung them out to dry. Fear not—you shall have them again, but you must wait. We are poor folks : we have done the best we can ; and when all is done that can be done, as the man said when he had emptied all the

dishes, and laid himself down to sleep, what can we do more ?”

“And am I to be here for ever ?” said Yeldez, in an impatient tone. “Is the world gone from me, that I should lie here thus ?”

“Allah forbid !” exclaimed the kind Rosebud. “Let us hope for the best. God is great ! But it is something to have been saved from drowning !”

“I must be saved from a great deal more,” said Yeldez, gaining fresh strength every moment, “or my enemies will find me out, and your saving me will have been to little purpose !”

“What can we do ?” said the negress. “Speak, and we will act. Only let Selim return, and he will help us, we can hide you, and protect you. Rosebud is a free woman, and although she is black in the face, yet her heart is white and has nothing to blush for.”

“*Aman, Aman !* Mercy, mercy !” cried Yeldez, in a fit of despair, having now come to a full sense of her desperate and forlorn situation. “Oh, woe, woe ! where shall I go ?”

what will become of me? I am a lost creature—utterly lost! without a friend—without hope.”

She then gave vent to a copious flood of tears, and bemoaned herself in such a manner, as drew forth the utmost sympathy from her humble, though devoted protectress.

“What say you? Oh, my eyes!” said Rosebud. “Am I nothing? You have fallen into good hands. Although we are poor and nobody, none shall hurt you here; besides, who knows of your existence except Selim and I? all else, curses be on their heads, think you, at this moment, at the bottom of the sea, and what more would you have?”

“What more?” exclaimed the ungrateful beauty, with a heart of stone: “what more, did you say? Is being thrown out of that divine harem nothing? Is being overcome by the malignity of those unsainted enemies of mine—those demons in human form, nothing? Is being a thing of naught, when no one was good enough to kiss my feet before, nothing? What words are these? You speak words without knowing their import. But I must go

hence—I must fly, or I shall be discovered, and then death, a thousand times worse than drowning, will be my portion. I must go. Where is Selim, that he may take me hence?”

“I will find him, and send for him,” said the obedient negress, who without once calculating results, was ready to do anything for the beautiful, though wilful creature, that lay before her.

Selim, indeed, was not far distant; for his mind had undergone a great revulsion since this adventure, and he scarcely knew whether his heels touched the heavens, or his head the earth. He had never experienced the effects of woman's beauty before, and now his eyes had seen a vision of one, such as few Mahomedans had ever beheld. What could he do? fate had struck him, and forgetting his boat, he could do nothing better than sit on a stone on the shore, near his mother's dwelling. There he indulged in all sorts of thoughts. He felt quite certain that he had caught a princess, for what else could have been thrown out of the seraglio, where he was certain they were all princesses? But what was he? a poor boatman, and half a

negro, with his mother a negress. He sighed, as his mind dwelt upon this, because his heart was deeply involved in the fate of the beautiful creature he had saved; and he was ready to perform any deed by which he might hope to make himself agreeable to her. He was, therefore, not long in obeying the summons of his mother, when she called him to come to her assistance. When he entered the room, Yeldez scarcely deigned to cover herself with a veil on his account, but seemed pleased to observe the confusion of face which her beauty evidently produced upon the unpractised youth.

She was not long in addressing him; and, without making a single allusion to the fact of his having been her deliverer, she seemed to expect that both he and his mother should feel grateful for the preference which fate had conferred upon them, in throwing her into their hands. She said to Selim:

“ Oh, man, look at me! this cannot be. I must not remain here—my blood will be on your heads if I do! I must go, and that immediately. Such beauty as mine cannot re-



main concealed, and if it be known that I am alive, then let Allah have mercy upon all our souls !”

Selim remained fixed on his seat like one struck with loss of mind ; he gazed upon Yeldez with the stare of one who could only see one thing. To hear such a piece of beauty speak, address him, seek his advice and require his assistance, made him feel that he was become a full blown man all at once. He knew not what to say or what to propose. The only wish which he could precisely define, was that she might sit in his boat and that he might row her about from morning to night ; in short, he willingly would have rowed himself to death on her account. He knew not what else to propose, for he was possessed of nothing but his boat and his strength. Seeing that he did not answer the words addressed to him, his mother exclaimed :

“ Selim ! what has happened ? are you mad, hearing you hear not, and seeing with your eyes you see not—do you not hear the Kadun speaking to you ? Praise be to Allah, he is

born with all his senses perfect—it is only now that he has become like a lantern without a candle in it. Speak, oh man!”

Selim then said, as if he were awakening from sleep,

“ Upon my head be it ! what is there ? ”

“ There is this,” said Yeldez ; “ you must get me the means of escaping hence. I want horses, I want clothes, I want trunks—you must come with me. If you are a man, hear me and act. Such things I want, therefore, such things go get.”

The negress and her son stared at each other, and looked around at their poverty ; they would have given all that Yeldez wanted and more, had they had it to give, but excepting to sell themselves, they saw no other means of raising enough to buy all that their guest required.

“ We are poor and have nothing,” said the tender-hearted Rosebud ; “ and many things are requisite. We might as well pray for the Sultan’s crown as hope for a horse ; and you want several. What are we to do ? ”

“ Have you nothing to sell ?” exclaimed Yeldez—“ am I to die here in despair ?”

“ I have only got a boat,” said Selim, “ and that we live by ; we would give you that, only you cannot travel on land in a boat.”

“ Cannot you sell that,” said the stone-hearted Yeldez ; “ that would buy two horses, and we don’t want more to take us away.”

The very mention of selling his boat made Selim’s tongue leap from its socket, and his poor mother too felt that such a proceeding would break her heart, and so they paused ere they made a reply.

“ Speak,” said Yeldez, “ could you not sell your boat ?”

“ Yes,” said Selim recovering himself, “ certainly ; we will do anything to save your life. Allah is great, Allah is merciful—as we have lived so we shall live.”

“ *Baricallah!* oh well done my son,” exclaimed the negress. “ You are a real man, and nothing is now wanting to secure the welfare of our guest. We will sell the boat, and as Allah is wise, so is he merciful ;—whatever is—is.”

Selim without more ado, immediately left the house and walked to the quay where his boat was anchored, and where he was sure to find several of his brother boatmen, to whom he intended to communicate the intelligence that he wished to sell his boat. When he got there he found an old waterman seated on the quay smoking his pipe, one who had been very kind to him when first he begun his career, and to him he gave notice of his intention.

"Allah, Allah! what has happened?" said the old man. "Selim, my son, are you clean mad?"

"*Kismet!* fate!" said Selim turning up the palms of his hands and shrugging up his shoulders, "what can I do?"

"God is great!" said the old boatman; "*bacalum*, we will see."

"*Bacalum* won't do here," said Selim. "*Wallah Billah*--by Allah and for the sake of Allah, I must sell my boat, and that right soon. Wherefore will you talk about *bacalum*?"

"Is it so?" said the old man taking a prolonged whiff of his pipe, "then very well."

He then began to calculate what the boat, its sail, oars, and other appurtenances might be worth, and assured Selim that he would find no difficulty in effecting a sale, since the boat enjoyed an excellent reputation, and there were not wanting those who would be happy to take his place at Scutari stairs.

Fortune, indeed, did favour him, for before long a purchaser came forward, and he found himself enabled, with the sum he received, to buy two *beguirs* or hack horses, which were likely to suit the purposes of slow travelling.

Selim, excited in a manner which was quite new to his nature, impelled by a passion which for want of a better word might be called love, at the same time depressed by the loss of what had stood to him in lieu of happiness and daily bread, Selim thus situated, appeared at the door of his mother's house, holding a horse in each hand, and announcing himself ready to depart, withersoever fate and Yeldez might direct.

His mother, nothing daunted by the loss she was about to sustain, and impelled by true

generosity of soul, no sooner caught sight of him and his new companions, than she exclaimed :

“ Welcome, Selim ! oh well done Selim ! Allah will reward you.”

Then addressing Yeldez, she said,

“ Come, arise and go. Here are horses, and here is Selim ready to accompany you.”

“ Go !” exclaimed the captious beauty without even once attempting to express her thanks ; “ how am I to go without clothes ? what words are these ? Then how shall we proceed without a guide ? Selim is no guide by land.”

The oppressed youth delivering over the horses to his mother’s care, with a sigh proceeded in search of a guide, whom having found, and having besides procured a veil and its accompaniments for Yeldez—the moment, at length arrived when all was ready for departure.

The magnanimous negress had controlled her feelings with a power only known to those who act upon principle, but seeing her son on

the point of being taken from her, her fortunes sacrificed, and the unworthy object of her anxiety scarcely sensible of her kindness, as when Selim approached her to crave her blessing, she fell upon his neck, and weeping violently, said :

“ Go, my son—you have saved the stranger’s life once, save it again by your exertions, and when you have deposited her in a place of safety, return to your mother. Allah go with you; forget him not, and he will never forget you;—go, may your journey be prosperous.”

Selim acted almost mechanically; he received his mother’s blessing without shedding a tear, although his heart was full almost to suffocation; he assisted Yeldez to mount her horse, he mounted the other himself, and preceded by their guide on a third, which carried what little baggage they had, they made their way through the streets of Scutari, and at length gained the open country.

It was the dusk of evening when they began the journey and they travelled onwards,

the road being lighted up by the moon, until they reached a village where they halted for the night.

They took the great high road leading to the city of Angora, whither it was their intention to proceed, and after having sufficiently rested, they resumed their journey. Yeldez appeared to be in constant apprehension, lest she should be seized in her flight, and eyed every man she met with fear and suspicion. She behaved towards Selim as if he were her slave, ordering him to attend her without the least compunction, and betraying no symptoms of obligation for his self-devotion. Never had selfishness before produced so favoured a child, but had this been the worst feature in her character it were well, for the sequel will shew that in her present position she was virtue itself, compared to what her character was in reality. Travelling or halting, her own ease and accommodation were first considered; her companion she merely considered as much belonging to herself as the horse which conveyed her.

Little reflecting upon her escape from death,



she appeared to feel insulted by the meanness and poverty of her equipage, and visited her ill-humour upon her generous attendant, by unceasing arrogance.

Selim on the other hand was entirely subdued by her charms ; he obeyed her word as he would the mandates of a divinity ; there was a magic in the tones of her voice, and a fascination in her manner, which overpowered all the senses of the youth and made him feel that he was honoured and much favoured by being allowed to approach and do her service.

Having reached Angora in safety, they took up their abode in the largest khan, the resort of merchants and caravans. A small room, the door of which opened upon a long covered gallery was allotted to Yeldez, whilst Selim took post at some distance near his horses. The khan was full of travellers, and all the rooms occupied.

Yeldez was disgusted with her state of destitution, left alone as she was in a room of which the sole piece of furniture was a mat, and she longed to better her condition. She looked about, as all needy adventurers do, for

some one on whom she could fasten herself, and fortune favoured her prospects. In the room next to her own, lived the harem of a merchant who had just arrived from Constantinople with merchandise. It consisted of his wife, children, and two female slaves, who being well off in their circumstances, enjoyed the comforts and conveniences of life, and eat and drank unsparingly every day. Yeldez, who found it difficult to procure the commonest meal, so scanty were the means possessed by Selim was greatly attracted by the savory odours that proceeded from the saucepans of the merchant's harem, and she very soon found a pretext for introducing herself there. She first ventured to peep in with her veil on, and seeing that the merchant himself was not there, she made her way boldly, and having pronounced her *Selam aleikum* with great emphasis, sat herself down on a good cushion next to the merchant's wife. The salutation being freely returned, Yeldez immediately put forth all her powers of fascination, and was not long in succeeding to make herself agreeable.

The merchant's wife was a homely person whose province, besides that of directing the household affairs, was to visit the harems of the great and wealthy among the Turks, in order to dispose of her husband's goods, consisting of silks, velvets and fineries, to their wives and daughters.

She was a gossip by profession, and travelling to and fro from the capital, she retailed news of the fashions, and histories of other harems, all matters of first rate importance to ladies in the provinces. Seeing one whose dress denoted a person recently arrived from Constantinople, and whose modes of expression and manner bespoke one accustomed to high breeding, she began to question her freely, and finding from her answers that she either was or must have been a lady of consequence, she treated her with great attention.

Yeldez could not refrain exhibiting her knowledge of the manner in which the women of the Sultan's Seraglio passed their time, and talked so freely of her intimacy with all the great and powerful of the land, that the merchant's wife

began to sink in her own estimation, and looked up to her new acquaintance as a person in every way likely to assist her in extending the sphere of her gains.

“ Sit, sit, eat eat,” exclaimed the merchant’s wife, “ put yourself at your ease ; but tell me, oh my eyes, how does it happen that you are here, thus alone, thus unprotected. You a woman of Constantinople, how do you happen to be in a sorry inn at Angora ?”

Yeldez had prepared a story, by which she explained, that being on her road to see her friends at Diarbekr, she was beset by robbers, despoiled of all she had, and managed to escape with only one slave.

She gave such a colouring of truth to this narrative, that the merchant’s wife gave full credence to it, and she moreover expatiated so much upon the Sultan in person, upon Sultanas, and the imperial Seraglio, that the good woman concluded that she was talking to a Sultana herself.

Yeldez had formed a scheme in her own mind, of acquiring a footing in the harem of the governor of Angora ; for she felt that once

there, her beauty and attractions would perform their office, and she would thus have gained an asylum of which she was so much in want. Finding the merchant's wife to be one exactly fitted to her purpose, she soon convinced her how useful it would be to them both were she, Yeldez, to be introduced to the governor's wife, to whom she would describe the modes of life in the Sultan's seraglio, excite her ambition to remodel her dress by that of the Sultanas, and bring before them the refinements of the capital.

The gossip was only too enchanted to be supplied with so new a subject to enlarge upon, and straightway betook herself to the governor's palace, and was soon admitted into the harem of that dignitary.

The governor of the city of Angora was a Pasha of two tails, a man celebrated for his justice, his mildness, and his observances of the Mohamedan law. He was dull of intellect, but good by nature and by principle. His house was as much a pattern of order and generous hospitality, as it was a picture of a monotonous routine, founded upon an undeviating round of

dull observances, and bigotted precedents. The wife of his bosom—his only wife, was the counterpart of this good man. A pattern of fidelity, true to her harem, unflinching in her daily habits, praying five times a day, and eating six; and whose utmost dissipation was simmering in a hot bath, or sitting, for an hour, on a tombstone, under a cypress tree in the great burying ground. They had a family of sons and daughters, all brought up with great care as good Mussulmans, and, excepting an occasional visit from such persons as the merchant's wife, who cheered them by new fashions from the capital, and related stories of what took place in other harems, they scarcely knew that any world existed beyond Angora and its vicinities.

As soon as it was known in the harem, that the merchant's wife, coming from Constantinople, was in attendance, a great sensation was produced. The Governor's wife first, then her daughters, then the maids and nurses, and lastly, the black slaves; all clapped their hands, and exclaimed "*Evallah!*" and when the welcome stranger walked in, carrying her burthen

of fineries, and fashions, she was greeted with exclamations of :

“ *Hosh geldin !* Welcome ! happily met ! come in—sit. Praise be to Allah, your steps are fortunate ! where have you been so long ?” and all the numerous expressions of delight, so common to the lips of Turkish women.

The merchant’s wife being duly seated, and surrounded by the whole female household, all displaying looks of welcome : the Governor’s wife was at length allowed to put this leading question :

“ Well, what news ?”

“ What know I ?” said the merchant’s wife ; “ there is nothing. All is well—very well.”

“ What news from Constantinople ?” said the Kadun, “ we are inhabitants of the country—we are people of Angora. What news from Constantinople ?”

“ What shall your slave say ?” said the other. “ The Emperor is there, the sea is there, the ships are there. Oh my soul, Stamboul ! but I have brought such things—such marvels ! There is not a Sultana, not even the Valideh, herself, who possesses such things as I have

brought! Velvets from Genoa, silks from France, cloth from England."

Upon which, opening her packages, she exhibited to the longing eyes of those around her, the fashions of the last year, as the novelties of the season.

During the exhibition of her goods, she did not cease to talk freely of the harems of the neighbouring Pashas and Agas which she had visited; giving accounts of the dresses of the women, accompanied by tales of gossip and scandal, which rendered her, perhaps, a more welcome visitor, than the exhibition of her wares.

But, not satisfied with this, the Governor's wife, being still eager to know more of what was passing in the interior of the Sultan's seraglio, questioned the woman steadily upon the subject, who then informed her of the existence of Yeldez, and of the acquaintance she had made with her.

"As you love your eyes, I swear," said she, "I believe she is a princess, herself! Such airs! such graces! such Constantinople



phrases ! If you want to know of Sultans and Sultanas, send for her."

She then related what she knew of her history, and straightway recommended that she might instantly be invited to appear.

Contrary to her usual prudence, the Governor's wife, who, if she had one defect, was overweening fondness of hearing of, and talking about persons of rank and distinction, without a moment's hesitation, despatched an old servant maid with an invitation to Yeldez to come without delay.

As may well be imagined, Yeldez was overjoyed to find her scheme so successful, and forthwith followed the old woman.

When she threw off her veil in the face of the assembled harem, great was the astonishment at her beauty, at the superiority of her manner, and, tattered though they were, at her garments. She took advantage of the effect she produced, by ingratiating herself, all in her power, with the Governor's wife, who she so entirely overcame by flattery, and by making her believe, that she, in her position, was

as great as any Sultana in the Emperor's seraglio, that she entirely took possession of that lady's good-will and affections.

Yeldez's arrival seemed to make a new epoch in the annals of this dull community. She expatiated greatly upon dress; and gave such alluring descriptions of the articles necessary to the full attire of a lady of distinction, that the merchant's wife had not hands enough to supply the demand made upon her stock in trade.

Yeldez became the object of every one's admiration and affection. They conceived she had fallen down from Heaven, purposely to make them happy. They believed every word she uttered; were ready to do anything she desired; and finding how great was the influence she was likely to acquire, she soon determined to make the house of the Governor of Angora the scene of her future exploits.

She was, however, a little appalled, when she heard a remark, during the morning's conversation, that his excellency was passing his time, before the noon-day prayer, in ordering and superintending the decapitation of three Jews,

for sundry crimes committed ; an instance of vigour in the administration of the law, for which, considering the mild character he bore, she was not prepared. She, however, succeeded in taking up her quarters in the Governor's house, which she did, without reference to the unfortunate Selim, who, for the present, she allowed to remain in the care of the horses, in the khan.

Having succeeded in making good her case with the Governor's wife, and daughters, when the evening came, the time when the Governor himself would appear, she was prepared with these, her new friends, to plead her cause, and give plausibility to her tale.

The Governor, Mustapha Pasha by name, was a small man, made large by dress. He heaped pelisse upon pelisse, and cloak upon cloak, until he had warmed himself up to the point he desired. And, in so doing, he increased both the measure of his circumference, and the respectability of his appearance. When in public, he wore an immense caouk, or cap, wound with long folds of white muslin, which he immediately threw off when he

entered the harem, where he indulged his ease by a lighter head-dress. His features were more grotesque than regular, because a large roman nose occupied the principal part of the face; but they were enlivened by eyes full of expression, and shaded by a brow not slow in being contracted. He was short in stature, and would have been some inches taller, had his legs been straight; but by sitting cross-legged during his infancy, they were curved, and, consequently, bandy.

So soon as he entered his wife's apartment, his whole manner changed. He was no longer the dignified man in authority. In throwing off his great cap, and supernumerary pelisses, he discarded every reserve; and he entered into all the business of the harem, and engaged in all those minor objects, interesting to his wife and daughters, with as much zeal as if he were one of its constant inhabitants. On the present occasion, after he had been well welcomed, and had placed himself at his ease on his wife's sofa, in answer to her upbraidings for long absence, he answered thus:

“Eh, my eyes, what could I do? After all,

they are Jews, and putting them to death was necessary.”

“But what crime had they committed?” said the wife. “Must you always kill?”

“Crime?” said Mustapha Pasha; “they were Jews—is not that enough? Let alone their stealing—let alone their defrauding—is not a Jew worthy of death, at any hour of the day? Go, go—your heart is too good! The Sultan did not send me here to soften my heart towards a Jew. But who have we got here? who is that?” said the Governor, pointing to Yeldez, who, having crouched down in a corner of the apartment, had listened to every word that had been uttered.

“She is nothing,” said the wife; “she is a *músafr*—a guest—an unfortunate one, who comes from Constantinople; and travelling to her friends, at Diarbekr, was robbed, and is come here to seek refuge.”

Upon this, the wary Yeldez, who had hitherto covered herself with her veil, seeing that Mustapha still kept his eyes fixed upon her, dropped it, and exhibited to his eager glance those charms, which had enslaved the heart of

one much greater than the Governor of Angora. She then, in apparent confusion, huddled up her fallen garment, and covered herself again, enjoying, through a small crevice, the state of excitement into which she had thrown the unwary man.

Mustapha was like one whose eyes are suddenly dazzled, by perceiving a sunny landscape through the partial opening of a fog. Accustomed as he was to the homely features of his wife, the small beauty of his own daughters, and the hideousness of his women slaves, his feelings underwent so great a revulsion, upon being struck by such a flash of beauty, that the ponderous Governor was turned, at once, into a lively gallant. He became interested in the stranger, inquired into her history, was officious and obliging, and showed how powerful are the effects of a woman's glance upon man's unprotected nature.

His wife, good soul, in perceiving her husband so moved, was pleased to find that her new friend had also found a protector in the Governor, and increased in her attentions. She appointed a place for her to sleep in, gave her

clothes, provided her with every necessary, and in short, loaded her with kindness.

Yeldez, finding how great was her success, determined to confirm it, by performing an act, which is always looked upon of importance, in Eastern countries, as coming from an inferior to a superior, that is, making a present. She came to the resolution of asserting that Selim was her slave, and of presenting him, as a gift, to the Governor. By so doing, she intended to confirm her pretensions to being a person of consequence—thus insuring good treatment to herself, and also ridding herself of the youth effectually ; confiding in her own ingenuity, and superior powers of persuasion, to suppress any untoward effect which his own story might produce. No feelings of gratitude checked her : she cared not for the preserver of her life ; she did not reflect upon all he had abandoned to fulfil her wishes, nor upon the ruin she had brought upon his poor mother—she only intended to please herself. The selfish Yeldez became flint when her interests were concerned.

Accordingly, the morning after her successful

attack upon the Governor's heart, she claimed an audience from him ; and, in set terms, with that volubility of tongue, which was one of her characteristics, she related her story. Stating how, that for family purposes, she had left Constantinople properly escorted, that she was on her road to Diarbekr, when, in a forest, she had been robbed, and that the only one of her escort who had remained faithful, was her slave, Selim, whom she now presented, in gratitude for the favours already conferred upon her.

In doing this, what with soft sighs, side glances, and direct stares, she so enchanted and subdued Mustapha, that she seemed, from that moment, to have acquired unlimited power over him.

She then sent for Selim, upon whom, in consideration of the liberty she had taken to dispose of him, she now bestowed her attentions, and persuaded him how much more to his advantage it would be, to attach himself to the Governor of Angora, who would not fail to advance his fortunes, than to return to the drudgery of a boatman's life at Scutari. Selim



allowed himself to be persuaded, and submitted. Unconscious, however, of having become a slave, he was appointed to the office of deputy pipe-bearer to the Governor, and was soon distinguished by his master, for his docility, sagacity, and the integrity of his disposition.

Yeldez no sooner began to feel the extent of her power in the harem of the Governor of Angora, than she determined to exercise it to the utmost. Her first object was to excite mutual ill will between the husband and wife. Aware that jealousy would induce quarrel, she said to herself:

“It shall be my fault if that quarrel does not lead to hate.”

Her view was to eject the reigning *kadún*, and to substitute herself in the affections of the unsuspecting Mustapha. Now, Mustapha and his wife, good, old fashioned believers in the prophet, excellent disciples of the true faith, had lived together as man and wife for above thirty years—their tempers, by force of habit, fitting into each other, as ill-shapen feet, after much pain and many wry faces, adapt them-

selves, gradually, to new shoes: their tastes assimilating, as water, poured upon vinegar, and sweetened by honey, makes very good sherbet; so their manners softened, as one stone rubbed against another begets a good polish. Even their very faces became portaits of each other, as the butcher, with much intercourse with fat meat, likewise fattens.

This good couple had thus progressed through the journey of life, satisfied with its dullness, rejoicing in its uniformity, and unambitious of any change which might endanger the similarity which one day bore to its predecessor. They dearly loved these soothing words, "*yavash yavash*, slowly, slow; *bakalum*, we will see; *pek eyi*, very well; *Inshallah*, please God; *Ilhamdillah*, thanks to Allah;" and were acquainted with no better philosophy, when visited by a vicissitude, than saying, "*Né apalum*, what can we do?" and submitting, with resignation to *kismet*, or destiny.

It was between these two individuals that the object of Yeldez was to disseminate jealousy and hatred. Having well infatuated the governor, she began to play upon his wife. She first

hinted with the assumed confidence of unbounded friendship, that she ought to leave her, not to intrude upon her hospitality.

“What has happened?” said the good lady, “is there anything you want? do not you eat what you like?”

“My eyes! what words are these? your kindness is all in all,” said Yeldez with downcast eyes; “but something has happened.”

“Something!” exclaimed the other with unusual alacrity, “does anything ever happen at Angora? something indeed! what is something?”

After a little hesitation she said,

“My Aga, the governor, after all is a man—he has eyes, he has a tongue; it is plain there is a something, and it is better I should leave you.”

The first essay which Yeldez made to arouse suspicion in the breast of the Governor’s wife failed; a lighted taper will extinguish in a stagnant atmosphere.

The cob-webbed heart of the Turkish woman was not so easily to be swept of its old habits. It required a still greater exciting power to arouse its latent passions, and Yeldez not dis-

couraged by the failure of her first attempt, did not lose an opportunity of repeating it with increased vigour. She succeeded, at length, in rousing suspicion, the first effects of which were indeed more comical than serious.

Those eyes which had so long been accustomed to look upon her husband as a necessary ingredient of the harem, as fitting to be there as a cushion or a tandour, were directed at him, with oblique glances and curious prying. Those ears which long had heard the daily repetition of words at particular hours and relating to objects as habitually occurring as is the rising and setting of the sun, were now alive to catch sounds wherewith to feed suspicion, and when uttered, were tortured into unusual meanings.

That mouth which received its food without a suspicious feeling, would now hesitate and dread the possibility of poison; in short, the unfortunate lady having given ear to the insinuations of the most wicked Yeldez, became a prey to the worst of jealousies. She lived in one constant state of prying, listening, whis-

pering, stepping on tiptoes, and watching in dark passages. She became suspicious of everybody and everything. Although Yeldez conducted her game with the dexterity of a most finished coquette, and with the experience of one who had been playing the game of life or death in the royal seraglio, yet she could not so completely mask her actions in so circumscribed a theatre as a common-place harem, as to throw off all suspicion from herself.

The Governor's wife began in truth to doubt her professions of friendship, and although Yeldez continually swore upon the Koran that she gave no encouragement to the jealous woman's husband, still facts spoke against her. He daily became more assiduous, his advances to the stranger were more open, and all the harem began to entertain suspicions.

At length, the storm so long threatening broke out with violence. The Governor's wife could no longer overcome her feelings, and seizing the opportunity after her husband had just issued from the bath, his beard and moustaches trimmed with more care than usual, the tips of

his fingers dyed and his most alluring silken vest exhibited, she addressed him with words such as the following :—

“ *Haif, haif*, Mustapha Aga! Shame, oh shame! Mustapha Aga, are you a man, with that grey beard of yours, and that wrinkled brow, that you should be dressing up and dying your fingers like a young *chelebi*, a musk scented coxcomb? If ever you had sense, where is it? Is it worthily exercised in peeping under veils and talking to the strange woman? Oh shame shame—and you the chief of a city too, a thing to which the world looks up! this must not be—after all I am your wife—your old wife—I have grown grey with you, I have brought up your children, and am I now to be put away for one who has no other recommendation than being a stranger with a young face? I would not have spoken, but my soul is running over; and not to speak were to burst.”

“ What words are these?” said the Governor, who felt abashed by this attack, and who willingly would have escaped it. “ Why do

you bring strangers into the house—it was your doing, not mine. Shall I not be hospitable? Shall I prevent the destitute from sitting under my shade?”

“What words are these?” retorted the Kadûn; “hospitality indeed! oh well done! Does hospitality enjoin you to ape an old goat? does hospitality tell you to sigh and look like a fool? hospitality feeds; it gives refuge to the houseless and protection to the oppressed; it seeks to give comfort and not to raise disquietude; hospitality indeed!—so much for your hospitality!”

Upon which the injured lady extended her five fingers into her husband’s face.

“Then as for your shade—there is that for your shade!”

Upon which, in wrath, she spat upon the ground.

“Who wants your shade? Yeldeç wants to entice you to sit under her shade, and to seduce you from your old affections and old habits, making a fool of one who has ever been thought wise, and creating disturbance where there has

ever been peace. This must not be— Mustapha Aga—she may become the mother of dogs if she pleases, but be you yourself.”

“ Woman !” exclaimed Mustapha, who had by this time recovered his self-possession, “ woman, do you count man for dirt or less than dirt that you talk to me thus? Are we made men for nothing, that we should thus be rated, and are women subjected to us by Allah and his holy prophet that we cannot look where we please and as we please without being spat upon and reviled? If the woman Yeldez has found favour in our eyes, what harm is there? why should it not be?”

These words had no sooner escaped from Mustapha’s mouth, than they were taken up by his enraged wife with all the violence and avidity that is sometimes exhibited by an angry dog chasing a stone that has been flung at it.

“ What harm is there, say you? And have I lived to hear this, I who have been your faithful companion for thirty years? Are you run mad, Mustapha Aga? has sense taken leave of your brain, or has the devil got into it?”



All the world will point their fingers at you, and say, *poof, poof!*"

Her words following close upon each other, gathered too fast to find utterance from her mouth, until she at length roared and vociferated with such violence, that the whole harem became alarmed, and collected in a body to hear.

The goaded man also became angry, and losing that composure for which he had ever been remarkable, was carried on step by step from flushings in the face, to clenchings of the hands and stampings of the feet, then to words of remonstrance, then to expressions of violence, and lastly to constraining by the hand, until he came to that awful result, blows. He beat his wife with his pipe, whilst she, groaning, retaliated with her slipper, until the whole scheme of the wily Yeldez's art was consummated, and the utmost violence of hate was established between those who had never before suspected that such a feeling could exist in their breasts.

They parted, vomiting forth mutual execrations, whilst Yeldez, with exultation in her

heart enjoyed the confusion, and whilst the harem, cheated out of its wonted quiet, was thrown into utter dismay, the children crying, and the slaves and women wild with apprehension.

When the cup of man's misery overflows, a reaction takes place, and he seeks relief either in some act of desperation, or relapses into resignation. The Turk usually flies to his pipe, and so did Mustapha. He quitted the chambers of the harem with a slow and solemn step, covering his retreat by quick explosions of growling and anathemas, and straightway made for a small cabinet overlooking the distant country, in which he took refuge.

He instantly called for a fresh pipe; his pipe-bearer, Selim, seeing the state of his master's mind, approached him with more than usual deference of manner, and kneeling as he placed the long chibouk in his hand, looked into his face with an expression of sympathy.

The oppressed man seemed relieved by this

attention, as one smothering is restored by fresh air, and at once said,

“ Selim, my son, this is much !”

“ What has happened, oh my master ?” said the pipe-bearer.

“ What has happened ? this much has happened,” said the master, “ that I am killed by those unsainted women.”

“ Women indeed !” said Selim, “ it is nothing, young as I am, have I not too been the victim of a demon of a woman ?”

“ How is this ?” said the governor, happy to have found a brother in wretchedness

“ As I am your slave,” said Selim, “ did not that vile woman Yeldez, who has gained access to your honour’s harem ruin me and my poor mother, when we had saved her life, and has she not made a slave of me when I was born a free man ?”

“ Ah, how is this ?” said the Governor; his whole soul awakened upon hearing the name of Yeldez. “ How is this—speak—let me hear your whole story, for if you be really no slave I am not going to break the laws of our

blessed Koran by detaining you as such—  
speak on.”

Upon this, Selim, whose heart had long been watching an opportunity to disburthen itself of its weight of grievances, gave a full and true account of his adventures, from the time of seeing the secret gate opened in the wall of the imperial seraglio, and rescuing Yeldeç from her watery grave, to the moment of being presented as a slave to the Governor of Angora.

During the recital, Mustapha often and frequently carried his hand to his beard and stroked it down in astonishment ; gradually he seemed to be restored to the full possession of his right reason ; he saw that he had become the plaything of a vile woman, his conscience smote him, he felt how unjustly he had behaved towards his wife—often did he ejaculate :—

“ Allah ! Allah !”

Willingly would he have spat into his own face when he recollected how much dirt he had been made to eat ; at length, when Selim had done and had taken up his usual position of respect, standing with his hands before him,

the Governor sat down in deep thought, and he was ordered to leave the room.

When Mustapha was alone, he broke out into every species of malediction, common to an angry Turk. He prayed for indignity to be heaped upon the father, mother, and ancestry of Yeldez. He cursed himself for consenting to be made so great a fool. He pulled his long beard out from before him to see whether an ass were appended to it. He remained quite assured that he was that ass, and he groaned within himself. Upon one thing he was determined, which was to expel Yeldez forthwith; he would not allow himself to dwell upon her beauty—he shut his eyes with an abhorrent shrug, lest something stronger than himself should place her again before him. The Turk knew what temptation meant, and felt its power, but he was deficient in the true motive to repel it. He then asked for another pipe, and eyed Selim with increased complacency, calling him son and child. Indeed his constant previous kindness had won over the affections of the youth, who having now un-

burthened his heart, vowed love and fidelity to his master for ever after.

It was then that a confidential consultation took place upon what was best to be done to get rid of the wicked woman. Mustapha was for sending her back to his imperial master to be drowned over again; Selim resisted this, for his heart was kind, besides he felt that, as a boatman and her deliverer, he might be inserted into the same sack, and drowned in her company. At length, the governor exclaimed,

“Let her go to Diarbekr, in the name of Allah—to Diarbekr she shall go. She said she was going to Diarbekr, let her go there or to Jehanum.”

And so it was decided; it was ordered that she should be given a steed and provided with a guide, and invited forthwith to leave the city, and go to Diarbekr. Selim was ordered to make every preparation to this effect, and he received positive injunctions, on no account, to allow her to have access to his master.

“By Allah!” exclaimed Mustapha Aga, “if I come within eye-shot of her, I am a dead

man. *Aman, aman!* those eyes! Shaitan in person looks out of them; they act like a talisman upon me—I tremble—my flesh creeps—my tongue cleaves to my mouth, and however well I may think of my wife and children, I am like water before them. Aman! Aman! those eyes!”

In the mean while, the Governor's wife, swelling with rage and overcome with confusion, retreated from her husband's presence with the same precipitation with which she would have fled from the *Shaitan al ragim*.\* She hid herself, and allowed no one to approach, until her anger, having in some measure abated, she called for that never-failing consolation, her cherry-stick pipe, and was soothed more by its fumes than by the power of her own reason.

Yeldez, who had managed to witness the whole scene, no sooner observed how efficaciously her acts had operated, than giving a loose to her vanity, she concluded that she

\* *Shaitan al ragim*, or the stoned devil, the devil driven away by stones, thus meaning that the temptations of Satan ought to be rebuked with violence.—See D'Herbelot.

was forthwith mistress of the harem, and conducted herself accordingly. She began to order about the slaves and direct the household, and even had the audacity, after some little delay, to follow the Kadûn into her retreat, and administer the mockery of consolation, in words to the following effect. Taking her seat unasked, she said :

“In truth, this is a strange world! Sometimes one is up and the other down, and then again it changes—those who are down are up, and the up down. Be you consoled. Allah is great—Allah is merciful. I, who am a thing of nought, am not unmindful what is your due; happen what may, I will be your friend. Should you require lodging, I will be here to order it; if you are in want of food and raiment, there will be no lack of that.”

“*Behey!*” exclaimed the Governor’s wife, “what words are these? Would you girt me with a saddle, and bestride me as you would a beast? Is it not enough that I have trouble in my own family, and shall a stranger come and give herself the airs of being its chief? Go,



woman, go put a padlock on your lips, and keep your tongue in its proper place."

"Is it thus you speak?" exclaimed Yelde, placing herself in an attitude of defiance. "My Aga, upon whom be blessings, is not a man to allow those he loves to be trampled upon. His house is his own, and his will the will of his servants. I am ignorant by what numbers you calculate, but my numbers, when placed side by side, give me a safe result. After all, there are more wives than one in the world, and Angora can well afford to present a second wife to its Pasha."

"Begone, woman!" exclaimed the Governor's wife, whose rage having now taken a new direction, broke out with increased violence. "Leave the house immediately. You, a wretch who, but for my interference, would have died of hunger, who came into the house fawning like a famished cur, and now turn round and shew your teeth like a pampered dog. You, who by dint of lies, have made us believe that black was white and white black, are you now to take the lead where you were happy to sit

in a corner unnoticed? Whatever the Aga may be, he is not the wretch you suppose. Allah has not yet turned the world upside down, nor placed the feet of slaves upon the necks of their masters."

Yeldez was not slow in indulging her wrath, which set in with a storm of words so violent and exciting, that the once pacific harem, so long the abode of peace and somnolency, was no more to be known—no longer a Paradise; its Adam had been turned out, and its Eve become a demon.

Suddenly in the midst of the strife, a message was brought from the Pasha to Yeldez, requesting her presence without the walls of the harem. This message, like water sprinkled upon fire, produced an instantaneous effect, for Yeldez received it in the full persuasion that the whole of her expectations were about to be realized, whilst the Governor's wife, in dismay, apprehended the worst. Yeldez sought her veil, and with exultation in her demeanour, stalked out to meet the messenger, certain that she would return mistress of the house. But she was destined to be greatly mistaken and

mortified, for at the door she met Selim, who no more her slave, and still less her devoted admirer, requested her to prepare for immediate departure.

“Departure! are you mad, Selim?” she exclaimed, with some little trepidation in her accent. “Departure! who is going—who is to depart?”

“May you live for ever,” said Selim, “but it is you who are to depart, and it is I, the less than the least, who have received the Pasha’s order to see his commands obeyed.”

“And whither am I to go?” continued Yeldez, her face now white with apprehension. “Who has done this?—Why is this?”

“You are to go to Diarbekr,” said Selim, unmoved. “You were going there before, and you must go there now.”

“To Diarbekr?” said Yeldez, in increasing despair; “what have I to do there? Why am I sent to Diarbekr?”

“You are going to your friends,” said Selim, ironically. “Your friends live at Diarbekr. You know you were beset by robbers in the forest, despoiled of every thing you possessed,

and your slaves fled, all excepting me. The Governor does not wish to detain you ; he has provided you with a mule, he gives you money and a guide, and he prays that Allah may protect you,"

Upon hearing these words, the unfortunate woman began to cry and to bewail herself, when suddenly her grief was converted into rage, for turning round her head, she observed that all the women of the harem, slaves, black and white, with the children, were collected together near its entrance, headed by the Governor's wife in person, in order to witness her departure, whilst joy and exultation beamed in every countenance. The negresses exhibited their white teeth, the children shouted, and execrations gradually broke forth, as with uplifted hands they motioned her to go, and shewed themselves prepared to bar the door should she venture to return.

"Go ! go !" they exclaimed ; "may heaven send you misfortunes ! May your liver drop, and ashes fall upon your head !"

Seeing that all hope of success had disappeared, she became as abject as before she was

arrogant. She turned towards Selim in the hope of softening his heart. She caressed him by enticing words ; called him her eyes ! her lamb ! her flower ! She tried the power of her beauty and the expression of her eyes, and put forth all her eloquence to persuade him to allow her access to the Pasha. But Selim was inexorable ; he was now proof to her wiles, and therefore refused to listen to her entreaties. For all answer he merely pointed to where her mule was in attendance. She prayed, she entreated, she promised reward, she threw herself upon his generosity, and reminded him of their former friendship, but without success ; to every word he lent a deaf ear, excepting to

- the last appeal, when no longer able to express his indignation, he spoke as follows :

“Do you talk of friendship, O, weak one, after having violated every tie ? It is not to boast that I speak, but I saved you from death, my poor mother received you in her house, humble though it be, and tended you as her own daughter ; we sold all we had, the very boat which gave us bread, to ensure your safety ; I abandoned that good mother to

labour for you, and how have we been requited? No expression of thanks has ever passed your lips, and by way of reward, you disposed of me as your slave—with your good will I should never again have been free. But my blessed *kismet* has thrown me into the hands of a good son of Islam; he is my friend and benefactor, and I have, thanks to Allah, been so happy as to rescue him from the wiles and wickedness of a faithless woman. No, do not look to me for friendship; be satisfied that you are allowed to leave Angora in safety, and not returned to those enemies of yours who would have destroyed you, but for my interference. Come, mount and begone.”

The wretched woman, seeing that her case was hopeless, proceeded without more ado to mount her steed, and accompanied by the guide, forthwith set out on her journey to join a caravan. Her enemies from within, when they perceived her in the act of departure, set up a shout of joy which pierced her very soul. Convulsed by feelings of grief, rage, and revenge, she wound her way through the streets

of Angora, uncertain as to her future destiny. After allowing her evil passions to revel in malediction and execration, she gradually resorted to those words of consolation, the refuge of every Mussulman in distress—‘Allah kerim, God is merciful!’ These she pronounced ever and anon, crying and bemoaning her fate until she reached the caravan, which was encamped on the skirts of the city preparatory to its departure on the following morning.

The caravan was composed of a variety of classes, mostly of merchants who were escorting their merchandize to the different markets on the road, of which Diarbekr was one. Yeldez was escorted by her guide to its principal conductor, into whose hands he was ordered by the Governor of Angora to place her, which having done, he returned whence he came, leaving the lone and destitute woman to seek her own fortunes. She, however, was not one who long gave herself up to despair, for in the beauty of her face and the graces of her person, she was conscious of possessing a

charm irresistible in its effects, wherever men were congregated. Accordingly she lost no time in ingratiating herself with the said conductor, from whom she gained the information she required, relating to the persons, the station in life, the wealth and importance of those who composed the caravan. The principal personage, he said, was an aged Seyid—a man of the law, who was accompanied by his harem, and whom he described as old, deaf, and almost blind. He had two wives, the one as infirm as himself, the other very young, to whom he had been united only the day previous to their departure; these, with two black slaves, completed his household. The wives travelled on mules, the slaves in *kejawehs*, or cages, he himself on horseback, accompanied by two men servants, a valet, and a cook. They lived very much apart from the rest of the company, and were bound for Bagdad, where he held a high situation among the Ullemah.

To this party, Yeldez, determined to attach herself. She carefully inspected all her other fellow travellers; but, after due consideration, she found that the Seyid and his women would



best suit her views. With them, she might ensure protection ; besides, it was plain that they would abound in good eating, which, to her, was a matter of high consideration.

Accordingly, availing herself of those arts, of which she was mistress, she soon became acquainted and intimate with the wives of the Seyid. She secured the good will of the old lady by listening to her complaints, and taking her part in the one great grievance of having a second, and younger wife, foisted over her head ; whilst she absolutely fascinated the young wife by her power of flattery, her liveliness and grace, and by the superiority of her manners and knowledge of life. She carefully secluded herself from the gaze of the old Seyid, himself, although, in truth, he was so blind that he could scarcely distinguish one face from another ; and also adhered, with great pertinacity, to her veil before other men, in order, thereby, to secure to herself the character of a respectable person.

But there was a calculation in all she did, as will be seen by the result, for her object, in fact, was to usurp the place of the younger

wife. She remarked that she and that young person resembled each other very much in height and in figure, that their voices were alike, and that in the presence of a purblind man and a half-witted old woman, such as were the Seyid and his wife, there would not be much difficulty to pass herself off as the one whose place she wished to usurp. She knew that the acquaintance between the old folks and the young wife was of the very short duration of two days, and that, therefore, she, the young wife, could not have made a very lasting impression upon her new connexions, and she conceived that by practising a very small portion of deceit, could she but get rid of the impediment that stood in her way, she might become the wife of the old Seyid, and no one be a whit the wiser.

She passed her whole time in ruminating over this scheme. She made herself fully mistress of the young wife's history, of the names of her relations, of their occupations, their modes of life, and did not lose an opportunity of adopting her manners and her peculiarities of speech. But when she came to

the mode of putting into execution the imaginations of her brain, she became puzzled. To administer poison was at present out of the question ; could her victim, in some dark night, be carried away by the violence of a torrent, nothing, she felt, could be more opportune ; but torrents were no respecters of persons, and she might be drowned as well as her rival. No, the scheming Yeldez no sooner built her castle in the air, than it vanished, and left her a prey to the horrors of uncertainty. In vain she endeavoured to console herself by a constant repetition of *kismet*, *Inshallah*, and *Allah kerim* ; but these soothing words stuck in her throat, and she learnt thereby that she was a daughter of Islam in word only, not in deed.

The caravan travelled slowly onward ; day after day it reached its evening destination, and still Yeldez was as far as ever from the execution of her scheme of wickedness. They reached Sivas, where they sojourned for several days, and where, amid the dark and lonely streets of that city, she hoped to find some opportunity of making her friend lose her way,

and thus be rid of her presence for ever. But no such good luck happened. The women resorted to the public baths in company ; they sauntered into the burial-grounds, they lounged in the bazaars ; and all this was done without giving Yeldez the opportunity she so anxiously sought.

At length, the caravan was again collected, and resumed its journey. The first night after leaving Sivas, it halted near a flourishing village, where it laid in a store of provisions, whilst Yeldez, in anticipation of reaching Diarbekr before she could realize her views, became depressed in spirits, her companions meanwhile being elated.

The next night, however, they were conducted to quite a different scene. In the neighbourhood of the halting-place, perhaps about half a mile distant, was situated a village in ruins, which, not very long since, had been abandoned by its inhabitants. It consisted of a collection of houses and hovels totally untenanted, and of a mosque, with its minaret, the only building which looked perfect. A path led directly to the village, and the place

of worship was of easy access. This spot at once struck Yeldez as likely to aid her scheme; and as the day drew to a close, she invited her companion, the young wife, to accompany her in a stroll to the ruined village.

“Come, my eyes,” said she; “perhaps we may find something to carry away with us. Who knows! our luck may be on the rise!”

The other, full of life, and ready to adopt any proposal which might break the monotony of her existence, readily acceded, and away they went, laughing and talking, though careful to avoid notice. It was dusk when they reached the village; they visited some of the tenantless houses, and only found a cat, one of the last of its inhabitants. Yeldez then said,

“Now, in the name of Allah, let us go to the mosque. We will ascend the minaret.” She then waggishly exclaimed, “I will do my best to invite the faithful to prayers.”

“Let us go, as you love me,” said the young wife; “let me see whether you can chaunt the *azan* as well as my husband, the Seyid.”

Upon which, they laughed with unfeigned

merriment. When they stood before the door of the minaret, Yeldez perceived that it was closed by a wooden bar from without; withdrawing it, she found the winding stair-case quite practicable, and said,

“ I will go first.”

Upon which, she ran up with haste, crying out to the other to remain behind until she should tell her to proceed. When Yeldez got to the summit, she found the entrance to the small gallery which surrounds the minaret, quite blocked up with fallen stones, so much so that it would be impossible to proceed without great difficulty. It was then that Satan infused a horrid idea into her mind. She became at once convinced that she could destroy her companion. What so easy as to confine her within the minaret? By bolting the door from without, she would be secured without a possibility of escape. The wicked woman immediately acted upon this impulse. She returned below, and telling her unsuspecting victim that nothing was easier than the ascent, she invited her to enter.

“I am half afraid,” said the young wife, laughing; “were I to meet an Imam\* coming down upon me, how he would frighten me!”

“Fear nothing,” said Yeldez; “I will see that no one comes.”

Upon this, the doomed sufferer, gathering up her veil, tripped in, and had not proceeded many steps, before she heard the door close and the bar run into its groove.

“What has happened?” she exclaimed, little conceiving what was the real truth; but still without suspicion, she continued to wind upwards, until she came to the encumbered orifice, where a stone so large, surrounded by rubbish, was fixed, that she found it impossible to proceed. Still she imagined no deceit, but with a light heart, returned, exclaiming to herself, “I will make her soul weary for this trick!” When she reached the bottom, she found the door closed. Still she imagined no mischief, but smiled at the trick which she thought was intended. She exclaimed, in the innocency of her heart, “Yeldez, my soul, open—it is getting quite dark; we must not

\* The officiating priest at a mosque.

tarry longer." She waited for a reply, but not a sound did she hear. Again she exclaimed, "Yeldez, open—this is no child's play—let us begone." Still no sound. Then, in a tone of alarm, she cried out "Yeldez" with all her might, and continued repeating that word, increasing the violence of her scream, until terror took possession of her mind, and threw her into a state bordering upon distraction. There we must leave her, to relate what befel her too wicked companion.

It must be told that Yeldez, in contemplation of the possibility of perpetrating the crime which we have just related, had purchased at Sivas, a veil precisely the same as the one usually worn by the young wife. It was of blue chequered cotton, and differed from the one usually worn by Yeldez, which was white. She had purposely adopted her new veil, in order to identify herself with her companion, and now, in complete disguise, the murderess in intent, fled hastily from the spot in which she had secured her victim. She heard her cries, but her heart was hardened. She continued to hear them for some time, but they died gra-



dually away as she approached the halting-place of the caravan, and there she was rejoiced to find it was impossible they could be heard. She passed on stealthily to the spot where the Seyid and his family were settled, and taking upon herself the duties and acts of service of her who was absent, as soon as possible, she lay herself down to rest. Nothing was said or done that night which could make her suspect that she was herself missed, or that the victim of her villainy had been inquired for.

Early in the dusk of the morning, as usual, the caravan was on its road, and Yeldez, personifying the young wife, took possession of her steed, and placed herself precisely in the position she would have occupied, riding in her place, and acting her part as if she belonged entirely to the Seyid. The only misgiving she felt, was the probability that a search would be instituted for herself when it was known that the mule which she was accustomed to ride remained unappropriated; but she was soon relieved from this apprehension when she perceived it mounted by a way-faring man, who had hitherto escorted the caravan on foot, and

who seemed to have quietly taken possession of the beast as his own property.

Accustomed as Turkish women are in a journey never to lay aside their veil, which conceals the face as well as the entire person even from their own relatives, it may easily be imagined how safe Yeldez was in her metamorphosis, and considering the taciturnity of her nation, it may be asserted that she scarcely had an opportunity of exercising her voice during the whole succeeding day.

In the evening, however, at the termination of the day's journey, the old wife who was accustomed to receive attention from Yeldez, seeing that she did not appear, exclaimed :

“ Where is Yeldez Khanum ?—why does she not appear ?”

“ What do I know ?” said the counterfeit ; “ they say she has remained behind at Sivas.”

“ Is it so ?” said the old woman, apparently not much concerned at the loss, “ then bring me a pipe.”

The old Seyid too, who had been the object of the designing woman's peculiar care, inquired

for her, but was soothed by the increasing attractions of his supposed young wife, who now, as he thought, began to acquire his ways, and adapt herself to his humours, and, therefore, he became indifferent to the attentions of the stranger.

Thus circumstanced, the Seyid, his old wife, Yeldez as the young wife and his servants, reached Bagdad in safety, without any one materially suspecting the change that had taken place. The old wife occasionally would start at the sound of Yeldez's voice as not being the same to which she had been at first accustomed, and sometimes was surprized that the young interloper, whom she expected to be all arrogance, and who of course she thought would exert her whole energies to supplant her, should, on the contrary, be more than attentive and obsequious; but these were passing excitements. Finding her life undisturbed, she relapsed into her usual apathy, and falling back upon *bakalum*, and *pek eyi*, and *shukiur Allah*, which formed nearly the whole vocabulary of her philosophy, she allowed events to take their course, and was contented.

But this state of things did not long continue. Yeldez finding herself installed in a comfortable house, well cushioned and carpetted, herself the depository of the old man's affections, and in a situation to be supreme in his house, threw off her former habits of subjection and took upon herself the entire command. She began to neglect the old wife; she fed her sparingly, and in the course of time threw her into a corner to scramble on as well as she could, looking upon her as a piece of ancient lumber. She did not fail to exhibit her own beauty on all fitting occasions, in a manner to let it be known that the old Seyid possessed a wife without compare, and so great was her reputation, that it became a matter of boasting and self-congratulation among the gallants and men of pleasure in Bagdad to say they had seen the Seyid's new wife. Her society was courted by the first women of the city, and she repaid such courtesies by inviting them to expensive entertainments, increasing the retinue of her servants, and freely spending the money which her supposed husband had passed his life in hoarding.

She was not slow either in endeavouring to curry favour with men as well as women, for although the Seyid was scrupulously observant of the decencies and propriety of the harem, and assailed any man with vigour who might venture to invade them, yet so full of wiles was she, that she secretly encouraged favourites, and took pleasure in turning the heads of those to whom she deigned to afford a view of her charms.

Among others, a young Cazi, who from his talents was bidding fair to become one of the first men of the law in the city, was particularly attracted by her fascinations, and passed his existence in paying his court to the old Seyid, thus seeking an excuse for prowling about the premises which contained his lovely wife.

As time passed on, the state of the Seyid's household assumed a totally different aspect to what it did on the first days of his return. Yeldes had made it a house of feasting and dissipation; it began to acquire an indifferent reputation—whispers of improper proceedings within the harem itself were circulated—the cause of

the old woman was taken up and canvassed, the injustice committed towards her was censured—the friends of the old Seyid thought it right to apprise him of what was said—he became alarmed, he found himself on the brink of ruin, and much confusion ensued; Yeldez, upon being made aware of such proceedings, became arrogant and insolent, and instead of suppressing her indiscretions, she only the more increased them, and thus were matters situated, when one day towards sunset, having prepared an entertainment more than usually gay and expensive, an event took place which put an effectual check to her career.

She had invited many harems of distinction to her house. First came the wife of the governor and her suite, then the women of the Mufti, then those of the chief merchants and of the elders. She displayed her best carpets, set her fountains playing, and spread her floors with the choicest fruits and sweetest flowers. She hired women dancers and bands of musicians, and it was also secretly rumoured, that wine was to be had in the guise of Franc sherbet. By way of a great treat, she had per-

mitted the old Seyid, her reputed husband, to be present, and in order to soften down all asperities, she allowed his old wife to look out of a hole at what was going on. When the company had taken their seats, of a sudden a great noise was heard in the street as of the arrival of a caravan. Camel-bells, shouts of drivers and horsemen, trampling of horses' feet, and other indications of a travelling body were distinguished, and strange to say, the whole of this disturbance directed its steps to the Seyid's house and there stopped.

“What is this?” said one.

“Whence do they come?” said another.

“It must be a mistake,” echoed a third.

At length a messenger came running in haste to announce to the old Seyid, that Omar Aga, the brother of his young wife, with a body of cavaliers, escorting a lady in a takhteravan, had arrived from Angora, and inquired for him, peremptorily insisting upon seeing him. At this intelligence, which soon was carried from mouth to mouth, Yeldez was seen to turn deadly pale, whilst her eyes were directed up-

ward towards a summer-house, where scandal afterwards asserted that the young Cazi had taken post.

The old Seyid immediately arose and proceeded to the men's apartments of the house to receive his guest, apparently highly delighted at a visit which he so little expected; but Yeldez appeared strangely perplexed what to do, or what conduct to pursue.

It was still worse, when she perceived a female completely veiled from head to foot, entering the scene of festivity, and proceeding directly towards her. Her heart told her who she was, and she almost sunk into the earth with apprehension. All the women present looked on with surprise, expecting something wonderful to happen, and they were not disappointed; for suddenly the disguised stranger threw open her veil, and discovered to the trembling Yeldez the face of her whom she had confined in the minaret at the deserted village.

“Who are you?” said the culprit putting on as much an appearance of innocency as she



could; "who sent for you?—wherefore are you come?"

"Is it thus you speak?" said the real wife, "is it thus you look upon one who, had it not been for the decrees of fate, would have been put to death by your hand?—woman without a soul! woman without shame! Where is my husband; let him speak—where is his wife?"

"Here! here!" cried out the old woman from the hole, "here—oh my soul—my eyes—my jewel! are you come indeed! we have all been living in a mistake—the Shaitan has taken possession of us;" upon which she was seen issuing from her retreat in haste into the midst of the assembly, and shuffling along, she ran with extended arms, and threw herself upon the neck of the new comer, exclaiming:

"Welcome, welcome! oh my soul! oh my eyes! we have been in the hands of the Shaitan—here—bid that woman begone, pointing to Yeldez, who having aroused herself into a fit of convenient anger, was pouring forth excla-

mations and execrations at no limited rate, asserting her innocence, and insisting upon her being a true woman and no counterfeit.

The cries of the old woman having been heard by the slaves and servants of the household, they ran to the scene of action, when, to their joy, they saw their original young mistress, and soon expressed their approbation. Such is the catching nature of the sound of many uplifted voices, that all the assembled women, connected and not connected with the family, began to vociferate, and the babel of voices that ensued was such, that confusion was never more complete. Yeldez ran from one to the other, her features distorted with excitement, gesticulating as might a maniac, exerting her utmost powers of grace and eloquence, in order to gain adherents to her cause, whilst the new comer and the old woman, denouncing Yeldez as an impostor, stood their ground, bidding her defiance, calling at the same time upon the name of the old Seyid their husband.

He was not long in appearing to their call,

for tired of the arrogance and tyranny of Yeldes, he was delighted to find that sober and quieter views were now opened to him. He had willingly listened to his brother-in-law's exposition, and speedily betook himself to the assembled women, where, accompanied by the proper authorities, he at once ordered the culprit to be seized and carried before the Cazi, the proper magistrate for trying a case so circumstanced. Yeldez resisted with all her might; she swore by every head and beard she could devise, she invoked Allah, and entreated the holy prophet; she denounced curses on her accusers, she fawned and flattered those whom she hoped might be her friends, and more than all, she exhibited her bewitching face to such men as were present, ever and anon looking towards the spot where she knew the young Cazi was secreted; and thus excited, thus beset, she followed the law officers to where the judge lived.

Now the judge was an infirm man, an old Cazi, who had retired to his own house after the labours of the day, and was taking his rest

when he was aroused by the disputants we have just described, who came seeking for judgment. The complainant, a Seyid, one highly respected among the Ullemah, enjoyed the privilege of calling upon his friend the Cazi at this unusual hour, and followed by his brother-in-law, his wives, and the many women who took part with them, they with mutual consent adjourned from the scene of the projected festivity, to the tribunal of the dispenser of justice, bearing with them, duly escorted, the wretched offender, the disgraced Yeldez.

The judge surrounded by his scribes and his officers of justice, marshalled the parties before him; the accuser with his witnesses standing on the one side, whilst the defendant stood on the other. Seeing who was the prosecutor, he invited him, with his brother-in-law, a man of wealth and power, to sit near him on the judgment seat, whilst the women remained huddled together below.

Yeldez was totally deserted, but seeing her admirer the young Cazi standing near the elder Cazi, the judge who was to pronounce

upon her case, she took courage and looked with a bold and confident aspect upon her persecutors.

The judge then ordered the complainant to state his case, which he was beginning to do, when Yeldez taking the words from his mouth in round terms accused him of falsehood, an accusation which became a signal for every tongue present, women and all to be let loose, which produced such unutterable confusion of sounds, that the judge in despair placing his head between both his hands, roared out as loud as he could.

“ You are eating dirt—I am dead—you have killed me—cease, as ye love Allah !”

But seeing that it was impossible to obtain silence from the women, he ordered his attendant officers to lay about them with their sticks, which they did indiscriminately, until partial order was restored.

Silence having been obtained, the judge proceeded to hear the complainants, and seeing they were persons of importance, backed by a cloud of witnesses, whilst the defendant had

no one to speak up for her, with very little ceremony he ordered that she should be tied up in a sack and thrown into the Tigris.

The young Cazi hearing this, made signs to Yeldez not to fear, and then threw himself forward vigorously, apparently to see the sentence executed. Together with the attendant officers, he seized upon her, treated her with great rudeness, made a show of violence, and dragging her away, before the assembled crowd, carried her off, whilst she in fact, fearing the worst, and not having quite understood what were her admirer's real intentions, uttered the most piteous screams, and begged that her life might be spared, in accents that would have softened stone.

The young lawyer, however, only increased his savage zeal, but whilst he dragged her into a secret place by way of thrusting her into the fatal sack, he slyly whispered to her,

“Fear not, I will save you.”

And so he did, for having secured one of the attendant officers as his accomplice, he first thrust Yeldez into a dark room, and then

proceeded to put his scheme into execution.

He cast his eyes upon an old goat that had long been made an inmate in the judge's house, which, by the help of his accomplice, he succeeded to thrust into the sack, and then forthwith in the face of those who were assembled to see the sentence put into execution, he threw the struggling brute headlong into the river.

A tremor seized all those who witnessed the fact; but it was remarked that the poor woman made a very strange noise as she fell, a noise which every one said they would have taken for the cries of a goat had they not been certain that the sack contained a woman.

This, to all appearance, was the fate of Yeldez at Bagdad; but she possessed so ardent a lover in the young Cazi, that she soon was redeemed from her state of thralldom, and restored to more liberty than ever she had before enjoyed. The youth, her deliverer, was in truth a frantic poet. He had devoted his mind to severe and

mystical studies ; and the subject of love had so entirely absorbed his faculties, that he had passed his time in seeking an object which might realize those imaginations of female beauty and loveliness which filled his mind. When he first caught a glimpse of Yeldez, he was satisfied that he had found what he had so long been seeking.

His heart became, at once, inflamed with love ; his imagination invested her with all the charms of Shireen, and he determined to make himself a Ferhad. His muse at once became prolific ; he wrote verses from morning till night, he wandered into the desert, he sought every opportunity of making himself wretched, and determined to fast, and become thin, in order that he might adapt his person to his poetry. Ferhad and Majnun, those two famous lovers, which he proposed to himself as his models, he knew lived on barren mountains, and encountered every vicissitude of want and hunger, out of love for their mistresses, thus becoming models of thinness, and examples of woe and self-devotion. He determined not to be outdone by them, and devoted



himself accordingly. Neglecting his person, he had haunted the premises where his mistress lived, in the hope of being allowed to see occasionally the hem of her veil floating in the wind.

Yeldez was not slow in perceiving the conquest she had made, and encouraged her lover by those thousand little arts, so well known to the softer sex. His love and imagination were wound up to the highest pitch of frenzy, when the catastrophe took place, which led to the sentence of death being pronounced against his beloved. He determined to save her at any cost, and having schemed her rescue in the manner above described, was rewarded by gaining possession of her person. On that very night, having prepared every thing for flight, he conducted Yeldez forth, when no one was present to watch their steps, and crossing the river, he there found two steeds in readiness, which, mounting, they fled, and took the road towards the frontiers of Persia, which, once having passed, they knew would secure their safety. They struck into the mountains, the young Cazi impelled by a strong desire to become Ferhad without delay, and when they had

reached a lonely dell they stopped to take breath. The youth, after assisting his beloved to alight, his feelings, irresistibly impelled by an exalted imagination, prepared to exhibit some act of self-devotion. He fell at her feet, kissed the print of her footsteps, ventured to touch the hem of her garment, and made all sorts of prostrations, accompanied by the most impassioned professions of admiration and love.

Yeldez, meanwhile, worn with fatigue and hunger, began to fear that her deliverer, in rescuing her from death, had taken leave of his senses. In lieu of all this love, willingly would she have seen a piece of bread and meat. Instead of this incense to her charms, happy would she have been to have smelt the fumes of a certain roasted lamb, upon which she had set her mind.

“Oh, soul of ecstasy!” exclaimed the enraptured lover, “let the dust of your slipper be made into perfume for my senses. Let the breeze which plays through your tresses, become the life’s breath of my existence. When you inhale the ambient air, may a portion of my miserable essence pass into your

nobler nature, and may the breath which flows from your heart be taken up, and infused into the inmost recesses of my soul !”

“ I wish you could find me something to eat !” exclaimed Yeldez, growing extremely impatient at such ill-timed rhapsodies.

“ Eat, say you ? Oh, my tender fawn, my sugar-loving parrot ! wherefore should we eat ? Let us live on love ! Let a mutual passion be our food ; and, let the world go on as it may, we will bury ourselves within the recesses of these mountains, and be all in all to each other !”

“ Why talk so much, in the name of Allah, when I am dying of hunger ?” exclaimed Yeldez. “ Up, and let us be going. I cannot stay here all night—let us find food and lodging.”

The romance which filled the breast of the young Cazi, became much qualified by the matter-of-fact view taken of their situation by his mistress ; and although, in his own mind, he willingly would have considered her as a young and tender fawn, anxious to fly from persecution to the protection of

the wilds and fastnesses of the wilderness, yet this craving for substantial food, which she expressed, made it clear to him, that for the present, at least, he must cede to her intreaties; and that she was one of those adorable creatures who are only in love when they have leisure to be so, and who never allow themselves to enjoy a rapture upon an empty stomach.

They again proceeded on their journey, and before night closed, reached a village by the road side, where Yeldez was refreshed by the food she so much desired, and where they passed the night. The designing woman was entirely taken up by the unfortunate turn which her affairs had taken; and whilst her lover was constantly endeavouring to urge his suit, she would check him by reverting to the untoward circumstance of her rival's reappearance. She did not cease to upbraid herself, for not having properly secured the upper part of the minaret, in order to prevent the exit to the gallery, for it was evident that the young wife, finding herself imprisoned, had worked vigo-

rously with her hands, until she had made an outlet, when, managing to make herself heard from the minaret, she was released by the first passing caravan, which conducted her back in safety to her parents in Angora.

In vain did the enamoured Cazi endeavour to place the sentiments of his heart before his mistress, she would always revert to her own position, inquiring with pertinacity what he was about to do for her, whither take her, and how provide for her maintenance. Twice had she been saved from drowning, and still did her uncompromising selfishness lead her to act, as if gratitude and submission were feelings unknown in the human heart. She urged him to conduct her to some populous city, where, in her inmost heart, she hoped to bring her charms to a better market than she ever could hope to do in the desert to which it was the desire of her romantic lover to restrict her; but he, jealous with apprehension lest he might lose his prize among men more powerful than himself, and impelled by that poetry of love which would make him devote his whole ex-

istence to the one object of his adoration, he determined to keep at a distance from the haunts of men.

Leaving Kermanshah at a distance, he bent his way to the far-famed Bisitoun, the great monument of the labours of Ferhad, his prototype, where that celebrated lover passed his days, endeavouring to calm the eagerness of his passion for Shireen, by chiselling the rock into historical records, at once exhibiting his talent and registering his virtues. The Cazi hoped, that by shewing this place to Yeldez, as an impressive lesson of what he himself was ready to perform for her sake, she might be softened into an assimilation of sentiments, and accede to his wishes. Accordingly they travelled onward, she, day by day, growing more impatient, he hourly becoming more enamoured.

When they had reached the range of rocks in which the monument was situated, the lover began to exhibit symptoms of his poetical ardour. As he approached the sculptures, he dismounted from his steed, and threw himself into a posture as if he would worship. He

conducted Yeldez to them, related the story of the loves of Ferhad and Shireen, and then asked her why they should not be the same to each other as were those famous lovers. What was his horror when he heard Yeldez exclaim,

“Are you mad, O, little man? Are you a fool, or am I an ass? Rocks what are they? Stones what are they? What are stone-cutters to me? Who was Ferhad?—may the grave of his father be demolished. And who was Shireen?—one bereft of reason—who knows? Why should we be so? For the love of Khoda, take me hence. I am perfectly dead with fatigue, wandering about day after day without knowing whither! Let us go where a woman can talk, see, and enjoy herself—why continue to treat me as a fool?”

These words fell upon the ear of the Cazi in accents so offensive that they choked his utterance; he felt as if they had been seared upon his brain. Inflamed by his passion, he was unwilling to complain, still he could not refrain from saying to himself, “And is my devotion and love to be repaid thus? After

all, gratitude is something, and she might express some little thankfulness to me for having saved her life!" He would have broken out into violent anger, had not a glimpse, which he obtained of her unrivalled beauty, again enslaved him, and thus bound and chained, he continued to travel onward until they reached the capital city of Persia, whither Yeldez insisted that she should be conducted.

By the time, however, that they had reached Ispahan, the intensity of his admiration had very considerably diminished, for romance, like a fire of straw, if it be not fed, soon becomes a mere vapour. The Cazi forgot that he was a Ferhad so soon as he found himself an inhabitant of the luxurious capital of Persia. He wandered through its magnificent *bazaars*, cast his bewildered eyes over its wealthy *bezestens* sauntered with open-mouthed astonishment along its great maidan, stood entranced before the Allah Capi, the gate of the imperial palace, and loitered with all the enthusiasm of a poet, in its umbrageous groves and among its delicious gardens. When he thought upon



Yeldez, he would exclaim, with a contemptuous shrug :

“ Whose dog is she ?” and passing on from one beautiful spot to another, he would tacitly settle in his own mind, that he would not save such another life again in a hurry. She, in the mean while, having entered a new world, surrounded by the various attractions of a great metropolis, among a lively and agreeable people, she could scarcely contain her delight. Her Cazi appeared to her a man of nothing, compared to the gay and glittering cavaliers belonging to the court of the great Shah, who were ever crossing her path, and making her long to be one of their jovial band. Whenever an opportunity occurred, she did not fail exhibiting her face to those whom she thought might be able to drag her from obscurity, and it was not long ere her desires were accomplished.

The emissaries of the Shah's *khajeh bashi*, or chief of the eunuchs, were ever on the watch in caravanserais, and places of resort of strangers, in order to discover objects, who, either by their beauty or their accomplishments,

might be fitting ornaments to adorn the imperial seraglio.

Much time did not elapse before the beauty of Yeldez, the *Túrki*, the Turkish woman, as she was called, became known, and, at length, she was made so much a subject of conversation, that the caravanserai in which she and the Cazi had taken up their quarters, was thronged by men endeavouring to gain sight of her.

One morning, subsequent to a quarrel between her and the Cazi, when, in audible accents, she called him dogs' father, and unsainted ass, which caused him to run into the street, exclaiming, "May the grave of her father be polluted," she was surprised by receiving an unannounced visit. A well-dressed man stepped in with an air of authority, and said,

*"Selam alieikum, peace be with you."*

He did not wait to be asked to sit, but seated himself at once, and then looked around him with great complacency. A servant who followed, having lighted his *kalian* and given it to him to smoke, the stranger, emitting a few whiffs, spoke as follows :

“I am come on the part of the Shah; I am his servant.” At these words, Yeldez’s heart began to beat with new sensations, and hope sprung up therein that she and the Cazi would soon part.

“What can your slave do that may meet your pleasure?” said Yeldez. “The commands of the Shah speak joy to the heart of this less than the least.”

“You have spoken well,” said the eunuch, for such he was. “You are a weak one, with wisdom at command. Exhibit more wisdom, by shewing your face.”

“Upon my eyes be it,” said Yeldez; upon which, without more words, she threw off her veil, exhibiting to the eunuch a power of beauty for which he was little prepared. Although in reality he was delighted, (if such a feeling ever forced its way into the heart of a similar being,) yet, like one sent to cheapen an article of purchase, he exhibited no symptom of approval, but with stolid eye and wooden face, said,

“*Khoob, aib ne dared*—well, there is no harm done; and then, having desired her to

stand up and expose the shape of her figure, which having done, he again said *Khoob*, and *aib ne dared*. He then inquired,

“Are you married?”

“Astafarallah! Heaven forbid!” exclaimed Yeldez; “what have I to do with a husband?”

Upon which, the eunuch repeated his words of negative approbation, and then said,

“Be ready to appear before the Shah after noon-day prayers. If it be agreeable to Allah, your fortune will be on the rise; and let me give you one word of advice. Keep your eyes open; this is King’s business, and no child’s play. Should any dog’s father say aught to this proceeding—hear my words—tell him to keep his tongue within the confines of his lips, or else we know holes out of which we can make it jump. I have said, — *khoda hafiz*—Allah preserve you.”

When the Shah’s officer had taken his leave, Yeldez could not restrain her joy. She clapped her hands, and made exclamations aloud, expressive of the delight which filled her heart. “I shall be the Shah’s lady. Once within the

royal harem, leave Yeldez alone to enjoy her own way. I will have the Shah's beard in my hand before another month is over, and lead him about as one governs a dancing-bear. Where is the Governor of Angora now, and where the Seyid of Bagdad? Mashallah! Yeldez will soon be a King's wife! I defile the grave of Governors and Seyids!"

Entranced with such like feelings, did the Cazi find the once beloved of his heart when he returned from his walk; and when he perceived her to be bursting with delight whilst he was overpowered by melancholy, he became extremely anxious to ascertain whence sprung this flow of new sensations.

"What has happened?" said he. "Has the mother of misfortune begotten a child of joy, or has woman become so perverse that she laughs when she ought to cry? Speak, for my head goes round with wonder and uncertainty."

"O, little man," said Yeldez, "your head may go round for want of something in it. We laugh for reasons good. Good fortune comes to our threshold, and walks in unasked. My fortunate hour to-day, is just noon-day, if

know you must; and when next you seek Yeldez, take care that there be not a crowned head in the way. Mashallah! we have seen things, and we have heard things! the world is a strange world!"

"Tell me," said the Cazi, in earnest, "what has happened? Is one who has saved your life, and abandoned everything for your sake, to be treated as a stranger? Are you to jeer, when he sighs? Must you make him say *lahnet*, curse, when he wishes to bless you?"

"What words are these?" said Yeldez, with the utmost levity of manner. "If fate says one thing, are you to say another? Things have happened, I tell you; and when you were out, and your place was empty, one who is nothing, came and said something, which something, changes Yeldez from a wandering beggar, to being a Shah's lady. Have you understood?"

The Cazi was not slow in apprehending what had happened, and although he at first felt that his heart was not entirely dead to jealousy, still, so entirely had his affections

been crushed and his hopes disappointed, that he was delighted, upon cooler reflection, to be rid, upon so easy terms, of what had been both his delight and his misfortune. When noon came, he stood by and saw, with unchanged aspect, the vile and heartless Yeldez take her departure from the caravanserai for the royal palace, escorted by a eunuch, who walked by her side, as she bestrode a horse handsomely caparisoned, which had been sent to conduct her away.

Inflated with vanity at her new position, she merely turned her head towards the Cazi as she passed by him, unmindful of her great obligations towards him, and little caring whether she should ever see him again.

His plans for the future were soon made, for he quitted Ispahan that very day for Bagdad, cursing Yeldez and her sex from the bottom of his heart, totally cured of his romance, and his love of stone-cutting.

She, however, was conducted straight to the royal palace, and thence to the seraglio. The town was ringing of her beauty, and the curiosity

of the women was at its utmost, to see one who was to make them hide their diminished heads, and, consequently, they were already leagued in a conspiracy to destroy her power, even before it began to be exercised.

The Shah, having retired from the public audience of the day and said his noon-day prayers, seated himself in his great open hall within the harem. The principal women then took their post as usual, each according to their rank, preparatory to the arrival of Yeldez. When she was seen entering the court, escorted by the eunuch, a general whispering took place, and when they both had made the proper prostrations, the eyes of all were rivetted upon the new-comer. She did not take off her veil until ordered to do so by his Majesty himself, when, aided by the attendant eunuch, she exhibited her face, and then again knelt down and kissed the ground. Her undoubted beauty attracted all the attention of her royal master, whilst it created a general feeling of jealousy in the women. The Shah gazed at her long, ordered her to approach,



and was much struck by the regularity of her features, her brilliant eyes, and her unrivalled complexion. But when, in answering the questions put to her, she opened her lips to answer, much of the charm was dispelled. The life of an adventurer, which she had led, had greatly worn off the feminine look and manner, nature's best provision for the attractions of womankind, and in the language she uttered, however clothed with artificial humility, however varnished by flattery, there was an impudence and an assurance which subtracted much from her attractions.

The Shah, who was a great connoisseur in female beauty, was not slow in perceiving these characteristics, and soon determined to which class of the many women, who composed his harem, she was to belong. He inquired what were her accomplishments—whether she could dance, sing, or tumble. These questions took her by surprize, mortified her vanity, and lowered the high pretensions to which she aspired. She freely owned that she could neither dance, sing, nor tumble.

“There is no harm in that,” said the Shah. “Inshallah! you will learn. Mashallah! you are made to be a *baziger*. You will be unequalled when you have been taught!”

Then addressing the head of the eunuchs, who stood near at hand, he said :

“Here, conduct Yeldez Khanum to the house of my dancing women : let her be well lodged, clothed and fed ; let her be put into the hands of the mistress, the teacher of our *bazigers* ; and when she can play, dance, and sing, and, moreover, tumble, in a fitting manner to be seen by the Shah, let her be conducted before us again, and, Inshallah, her face shall be made white.”

Yeldez, upon hearing these words, was ready to sink into the earth, whilst a titter broke forth among the assembled women.

“For the love of Allah, oh King!” she exclaimed, “I have never danced. I am a woman of birth. I have been accustomed to stand before princes. Wherefore, will you degrade your servant? Is this hospitality to a stranger? I am not fit, 'tis true, to kiss the

feet of your Majesty, but, still, I am a woman, and a true believer."

These words, spoken with energy, at first staggered the Shah's resolution; but when he again remarked the air of assurance with which they had been spoken, and the bold front which she presented, he persisted in enforcing his original order, and she was carried off to the house in which the royal bazigers, or dancing women, resided.

In a remote part of the palace, at Ispahan was an *Imareh*, or court-yard, and a set of chambers, exclusively appropriated for the use of the bazigers.

The number of these ladies was usually restricted to twenty-four. The choice ones, alone, those who were specially the King's favourites, resided in the palace: the remainder, being billeted about in private houses in the city, were required to be ready to perform, at any given time.

They were subject to the superintendance of a chief, an old woman, who paid their wages, kept them in order, suppressed

acts of jealousy and violence, even with the whip, if it were necessary, and was responsible that they were fitted to appear before the King. There were female *ustads*, mistresses, to teach dancing and tumbling; and even male masters were appointed; a circumstance which denotes, more than any other fact, how vile the profession of a dancing woman is considered.

Yeldez was installed in a small apartment, consisting of a sitting-room, a shoe closet, a kitchen, and a place for servants, and was soon informed of the duties it was intended she should perform. Her pride revolted at the degradation; and considering that she was in the hands of the most despotic of kings, the violence of her manner and language placed her in a very dangerous position. As a professed dancer, she felt that she should be lost for ever; her character would at once be fixed among the most infamous of her sex; a result, which, whatever might in reality be her practice, she was not prepared to encounter. Whatever might have been her position in the seraglio at Constantinople; whatever her conduct with

Selim, or her practises in the household of the governor of Angora ; however flagrant her conduct as the false wife of the old Bagdad Seyid—as the romantic mistress of the infatuated Cazi ; still, she had never fallen so low as to dance, in public, before men for hire.

With these sentiments fermenting in her heart, it is not surprising that she rebelled when invited, the first time, to stand up and dance.

“ I won’t dance,” she said, when the *ustad*, or mistress, called upon her to receive her first lesson. “ May my father be burnt first ! May the graves of all dancers be defiled. What sin have I committed, that I am made to twist and turn about my body, like an unsainted snake ? I am a woman of character ; wherefore am I brought here ? Go, tell the Shah, I will not dance ! ”

“ What words are these ? What dirt are you eating, O little woman ? ” exclaimed the dancing mistress. “ Are you come all the way from Bagdad, to teach a Shah who is to dance and who not ? Have you no soles to

your feet—or have you any soul at all? The *felek* makes many a creature dance, who never dreamt of dancing. Come, rise, stand on your feet, and try a jump.”

Yeldez still resisted. She possessed a spirit, which, once roused, did not easily subside. She refused to obey. Again the ustad persisted; again Yeldez refused; and so utterly did she brave the dancing mistress, so out-talk and overpower her by perseverance in refusal, that nothing remained to be done, but either to have recourse to the bastinado, or to report her conduct to the higher authorities.

Judging that her great beauty might, perhaps, be the means of gaining permanent ascendancy over the Shah, the prudent dancing mistress delayed coercion, and waited until circumstances should decide what she could not decide for herself.

It happened as the ustad intended. The Shah, who, in truth, had remarked the beauty of his new slave with approbation, and persuaded himself that she would become the first of dancers, was impatient to be in-

formed of the progress she made ; and, some few days after his interview with her, he thus addressed the chief of the eunuchs :

“The baziger, that new dancer who was brought before us the other day, what has happened to her?”

“As I am your sacrifice,” said the officer, who received daily reports of the state of the dancing department ; “as I kiss the slippers of the Asylum of the World, it is a bad woman. Whatever we may do, she will not dance.”

“How is this?” said the Shah. “Are the King’s commands treated as nothing? What has happened?”

“May my eyes be blind, oh Shah!” said the eunuch : “but the weak one says she is a woman of condition, and will not dance. She has a refractory soul, and laughs at the royal commands!”

“Has she yet eaten of stick?” inquired the King, drily.

“As I am your sacrifice,” answered the other, “we have refrained from coming to that

extremity, before the royal commands were issued, lest her feet should be destroyed ; but let the word, from the lips of perfection, be uttered, and, straightway, your slave will put them into practice."

"Bring the slave hither," said the Shah. "We will judge with our own judgment."

Accordingly, the chief of the eunuchs went his way to seek out, and bring into the royal presence, the wretched Yeldez, who, having for some time been allowed to remain unmolested, was enjoying, in her mind, the triumph which her pertinacity had gained over the dancing mistress. She had already begun to give herself airs over the other dancing women, and was laying plans for the subjugation of the Shah himself, to the power of her charms, when the chief of the eunuchs appeared to conduct her to the royal presence.

"Rise, and come ; the Shah requires your presence," said he.

Yeldez could scarcely breathe, for agitation.

"I come," she said. "But how shall I dress ?"



“Come, without more words,” said the other, “and follow me.”

She did as she was commanded, and very soon after stood in the presence of the king.

“Oh, little woman !” said the Shah, “what words are these I hear ? Wherefore will you not dance ? Wherefore not obey the royal command ? Are you mad ? Are you not aware, that to disobey is death ?—To oblige us to speak twice, is perdition ? By what figures do you reckon ?”

“The Shah is master to do with his slave whatsoever it seemeth best,” said Yeldez, in great humility, “and her poor understanding informs her, that so great a sovereign must be obeyed without demur ; but, as she also knows that he possesses a great mind, and a sound brain, she is certain that he will not command what is impossible—she never has danced, nor ever can dance.”

These words, having been uttered with all the expression that the arts of coquetry could command, she waited, with anxiety, to see what effect they would produce in her favour.

The Shah, who was peremptory in his commands, seeing how obstinate a subject he had to deal with, would allow of no further expostulations, but, making a motion with his hand, which was well understood by the khajeh bashi, she was conducted whence he had brought her, and, without more ado, he ordered a sound bastinado to be administered to the soles of her feet.

The unfortunate Yeldez was little prepared for such a result to an interview from which she expected nothing less than the entire subjugation of the Shah's heart; but, when she saw the preparations for punishment, by the introduction of the awful felek, and the procession of stout women, bearing long sticks, her heart sunk within her, and she became entranced with fear.

Without allowing her time to retract her resolution, she was seized, her heels thrown into the air, and, by the command of the chief of the eunuchs, received such a castigation, that in truth, her terrors, when thrown into the sea, seemed but as child's play to the

agonies she now underwent. She roared, she begged for mercy, she intreated, until, from excess of pain, she fairly fainted. She then was unloosed, and thrown into a corner, there to get well in the best manner she could.

Wretched woman ! When she came to herself, she moaned over her fate, and exhausted her mind with vain regrets, for having so cruelly treated the Cazi, who was so ready to devote his life to her service. What would she not have given to return to him, and even to inhabit the howling wilderness, as well as subsist upon his beloved dry bread and water !

However, the severity of the treatment she received only tended to harden her heart. She was more than ever determined not to degrade herself by becoming a dancing woman, and she freely announced this her determination to those around her. She poured forth her execrations, in language, such as even a Persian baziger had never heard.

Her companions became convinced that a live demon in woman's form had been imported

from Bagdad; they almost fled from before her presence. Exaggerated reports of her power of annoyance and endurance were spread throughout the royal harem, and every possible intrigue was set on foot to persuade the Shah to reject her and dismiss her for ever.

The Shah who loved beauty, and who was sensibly alive to the real charms of Yeldez's person was not at first willing to send her away, but day after day hearing stories of her violence, of the revolt she was likely to produce among his women, and of the disturbance which the insolence of her conduct was continually causing, he became more reconciled to the wishes of his ladies, and requested to be informed how he could best dispose of so refractory a slave.

There was a certain renegade Jew at Ispahan, who to further his fortunes, had embraced the Mohamedan religion; a low cunning scoundrel, a knave of notoriety, celebrated as a man and woman stealer on the Georgian frontier. He began life by making false jackasses, that is, he got possession of lean beasts and filling them with

water, made ignorant purchasers believe that they were fat, and thus sold them, when a short time after they died.

This success led to the invention of more frauds, until at length his superior ingenuity was acknowledged by the great professors of roguery and he became a leading character among the fraternity of kidnappers. In that capacity, he was frequently employed by the Shah and his officers, for the purpose of procuring slaves both from Circassia and Georgia for the royal harem.

At this particular moment, he was residing at Ispahan, for the purpose of claiming certain sums from the King, in balance of slaves provided, but the charges he made were so extravagant, that he several times was in danger of seeing them settled by the executioner instead of by the treasurer.

An expedient was first suggested by the Shah himself, (happy to enjoy a practical joke,) and eagerly taken up by the eunuch in chief, for paying off the Jew, and it was as follows:—

That part of the demands upon the royal

treasury should be defrayed in kind ; of which it was proposed that the person of the refractory slave, Yeldez, should form a principal item.

The Shah was extremely amused by the prospect of thus paying the rogue in his own coin ; the eunuch in chief was enchanted, and so was the whole court. The proposal was then formally made, to which, if he acceded—well ; but should he refuse, in due course he would be visited by payment in another shape, namely, the wrath of his Majesty, which would not fail to be exhibited in one of the many modes of punishment, common to despotic kings.

This proceeding so much alarmed the dealer in human flesh, that he began by protesting against such injustice with all the power of language. But, when he found that the proposal was truly serious, he bethought himself how he might best get out of the scrape, and demanded, as an act of common commercial justice, to see and examine the proffered commodity.

There was no difficulty in granting his re-

quest, and when, after the necessary precautions, he had surveyed Yeldez, strange to say, he no longer resisted the proposal, but forthwith acknowledged himself ready to receive her, preparatory to his departure from Ispahan.

Mehemed Chifoot as he was called, in person was entirely disgusting. Meagre and unseemly, his countenance exhibited the characteristics of cunning, duplicity and sottishness. He was so filthy, that no power could make him throw away his old garment; eternally in the same garb, he was plunged in sordid avarice, penury being remarkable in the smallest details of his existence. Having conducted Yeldez to his filthy den in the caravanserai, she there found nothing but the most abject appearance of poverty—no carpet, nothing but a mat—no cushion, nothing but the wall to lean against—she could scarcely procure a morsel to satisfy her hunger, and was obliged to sell some of her trinkets for a present livelihood.

She was made supremely happy at first in finding that she had foiled not only her ene-

mies in the royal harem, and the old fox the chief eunuch, but even the Shah himself, but when she came to look around her and found into what hands she had fallen, she bemoaned her present fate, and questioned whether dancing were not better. There was always to be sure her old consolation '*Allah kerim,*' but that she felt would not keep body and soul together.

She, therefore, determined to try what might be effected by acting upon the feelings of her new master. Taking the first opportunity of being face to face with him, she said,

“ Well, and now that you have got me, what do you intend to do with me ? It is plain, unless I am a dog, that Allah has not made me a bit of flesh and blood for nothing.”

“ My jewel !” said the dealer with a malicious leer, “ it is as God wills. We are less than the least, and as poverty has been decreed to us by fate, so must we be poor. What can a wretched creature do ? The Shah here is despotic, and you must say *Shukriur Allah !* praise be to Allah ! that sending you to me, he sent you a living soul and not a dead carcase.”



“ Had I died,” said Yeldez, “ better perhaps had it been for me ; but now that I am yours, inform me, as you are a man, what are you about to do with me ?”

Mehemed Chifoot lent a deaf ear to such a question ; he in truth had made up his mind, but upon that subject he was too keen a trader to allow himself to dilate. He felt that he had made one of the best of bargains. Having acquired great practice in ascertaining the money value of woman’s beauty, he was sufficiently experienced to know the description of article best adapted to the taste of the different markets, wherewith he traded. It was long since his eyes had feasted upon an object so exquisite as Yeldez. There was one place in the east where he knew such charms would be invaluable, and having received a commission to procure a slave so gifted, he was overjoyed to find that he now possessed even more than that commission required.

“ Allah Allah !” he would exclaim to himself, “ these Persians for once in their lives, have allowed the cap to be taken from off their heads ! they have given their beards into my

hand, and moreover allow me to laugh at it too I shall make my fortune by this slave—there is no sum that I may not obtain for her at Constantinople. She is fit for none else than that *khoneh kharab*, the Sultan—Mashallah! how he shall pay me! Get he but a sight of her, he will deliver up his jewelled turban, and say, ‘oh my soul Mehemed Chifoot, whatever you will be pleased to demand, that much will I give!’ But I sleep with my eyes open—I may be beaten in Persia; but as Allah is great, I beat in Turkey.”

Thus was Yeldez once more destined to return to her old residence, the Sultan’s seraglio at Constantinople. Had she but received a hint of the possibility of such a contingency, she would have sunk into the earth with apprehension; but the wary dealer was too prudent to give publicity to his intentions, and thus she luckily, for her present peace, remained ignorant of what fate was preparing for her.

Mehemed Chifoot was not long ere he quitted Ispahan accompanied by his prize; for he dreaded lest the Shah should change his mind and

reclaim her as his property. He made the best of his way into Turkey, and having sojourned some time in the neighbourhood of the Georgian frontier to complete his assortment of slaves for the Constantinople market, he at length reached Trebizond, attended (in addition to Yeldez) by a select parcel of Georgian and Circassian maidens.

Yeldez, however, still remained the principal jewel of his casket, and he did not cease making calculations upon the great profits he was about to realize in the sale of her perfections.

It is not necessary to describe—for it may be understood, that long before Mehemed Chifoot reached Trebizond—Yeldez had made his existence almost too painful to support. What with the violence of her temper, her complaints at the treatment she received at his hands, and her anxiety to know whither he was conducting her, his life became so wretched, that it was only the hope of the profits he was about to realize, which prevented him from throwing her headlong down some precipice,

or leaving her to starve in the wilderness. At length, their conversation dwindled to some few words of the following description, "Cursed imp of Satan!" was his consolatory ejaculation. "Jew without a soul!" was the result of her wrath.

At Trebizond, the whole party embarked on board a vessel bound to the great city, and after having completed their miseries by a sea-voyage, they reached the Bosphorus in safety. It was then that Yeldez was struck by the danger of her position, again beholding the spot she had so carefully avoided, and to which destiny seemed determined to restore her. The crimes she had committed, so long buried in her breast, although recorded in the annals of the seraglio, now forced themselves upon her recollection in colours so terrible, that her whole frame shook with apprehension. "Should I once again be confined within those fearful walls," she exclaimed to herself, "what will become of me? I shall find all my former enemies, fiends that they are, ready to tear me to pieces! Can time change the animosity of woman's heart? And that fatal

old devil's grandfather, the Kislár Aga, what will he say to me? I shall be thrown into the sea again, as sure as *kismet*, and no Selim at hand to help me out!" She continued to distress her mind with such like forebodings, until her cheek was white with fear. She would have killed the renegade Jew, her keeper, in order to escape, had she been able so to do, but she was too well watched, her only hope being that she might be purchased by some ancient Effendi, who would hide her in the recesses of his obscure harem, and protect her from the punishment she felt to be her due.

Mehemed Chifoot, having deposited his slaves in a place of safety, straightway dressed himself in decent attire, that is, covered his rags with a cloak, and proceeded to the imperial seraglio, there to report to the chief of the Sultan's ladies, the treasure of which he was the possessor. He was well known at the 'Sublime gate,' and although properly despised, yet a ready admittance was ever afforded to him, being a recognized agent to the pleasures of his imperial master. His arrival was an-

nounced to the Kislár Aga and he was straightway introduced into the chamber in which that dreaded chief gave audience.

Since the ejection of Yeldez from the seraglio, a considerable time had now elapsed, and changes had taken place. The Kislár Aga, who had been the cause of her punishment, was dead, and another, unacquainted with the person of Yeldez, occupied his place who had been appointed to the office through the influence of the Sultan's mother, and imported from Egypt. He was one of the finest specimens ever known of the hideous negro, having been prepared for his office by one of those simple, though cruel operations, well known in Ethiopia. His alarming ugliness, his demoniacal temper, his unflinching severity, and his great fidelity, rendered him a prize above all price to the great *Khonkhor*, who being curious in female beauty, was also ingenious in jealousy. It was before this monster that Mehemed Chifoot bent the knee and bowed the head, with trepidation, as he entered the dark room in which he was seated. Having

settled his features into the best form of adulation he could master, he first lauded the wisdom and perfections of the being scarcely human before whom he stood, and when he had relaxed a pair of wrinkles from the creature's contracted brow, and stopt the vibration of his hideous ears, he then undertook to give a description of the beautiful slave, of whom he was the owner.

The wily renegade possessed the language descriptive of woman's charms at his fingers' ends. Eyes of the antelope, teeth like pearls, cheeks of the rose, nose like Mount Ararat, waist of a cypress tree, skin like satin, rotundity of the moon, odours of musk and ambergris, all these, and a hundred such like figures, did he employ to describe the beauty of Yeldez, a creature, he asserted, who had inflamed the whole of Caucasus by her beauty. This miracle of perfection, he said, it was his good fortune to possess, and he would have deemed it sacrilege to offer her to any one, before he had presented her to the eyes of the great and intelligent Kislar Aga.

The insolent negro having listened to this speech, paused for a moment, and then announced that he would himself go and see the slave with his own eyes ; but at the same time, avowed that if she did not answer the description, he would not be satisfied unless he returned with Mehemed Chifoot's ears in his pocket. To this the renegade agreed, saying, " Upon my unworthy head be it," and making the most servile prostrations and exclamations, he went his way to prepare Yeldez for the visit.

When the wretched woman was informed of the honour about being conferred upon her, and who the person was she was to see, she almost swooned away with fright. She began to cry and to bemoan herself, and after having given way to the most violent lamentations, at length avowed that she would not shew her face to the vile negro. She asserted that being a Mahomedan woman, no one of the true faith could force her to expose her face and her person, were she averse to such an exhibition.



“But,” said Mehemed Chifoot, who now was at her knees to soften her temper and make her submit to his wishes, “but this is the most amiable of men and the kindest of negroes; his object is to advance your fortunes. It only remains with you to rule the empire, and to give laws to the whole state of Islam. Wherefore do you fear? Instead of being the slave of the Sultan, his mighty highness will become your slave, and the world will be at your feet. What can you wish for more?”

These assertions gave no comfort to Yeldez. She saw nothing but annihilation were she once more to become an inmate of the seraglio, and she began to consider whether it would not be wiser to state her exact position to her present master, and throw herself upon his mercy, than run the risk of the certain death which she felt assured was awaiting her. But during this interval, and before she could make up her mind what course to pursue, the Kislak Aga, slowly bending his way to the residence of the renegade Jew, reached it true to the appointed time. He was received with all due

honours, and at once introduced into the room where Yeldez, by way of distinction, was seated alone. No sooner did she cast her eyes upon him, than she perceived at a glance, he was not the man of terrors, her former enemy, and this discovery at once so quieted her mind, that from fearing, she began to hope. Matters, thought she, might be changed since her expulsion, and her apprehension might not be well-grounded. Having at first determined to resist shewing her face, she now as quickly resolved to exhibit all her charms to the best advantage, and when, at the demand of the Kislar Aga, she threw aside her veil, it was plain by the smile that played upon his horrific lips, and the flashing of his eyes, that he was satisfied the renegade's description of his slave was not overcharged.

The chief of the royal women having approved, returned overjoyed to inform his Majesty the Sultan, of the discovery he had made, and urged the necessity of instantly gaining possession of so rare a specimen of beauty.

When he had received the royal commands granting his request, he called Mehemed Chifoot

before him, and striking a bargain, agreed to pay a sum for Yeldez, so much above the usual price of Georgian slaves, that it was said so great a compliment had never been paid to womankind, since the days of a certain tyrannical slave, who, in the preceding reign, had caused the grand vizier's head to be cut off and placed at her feet. A handsome horse, magnificently caparisoned, with a band of black eunuchs, was sent to conduct her to court, and an apartment was prepared for her reception with appropriate attendants to wait upon her.

In the mean while, great had been the sensation created in the imperial harem, by the report of the speedy arrival of so extraordinary a beauty. There was not a woman within it who did not hold herself aggrieved by such an intrusion. Already a host of rivals were prepared to dispute her charms and pull her reputation to pieces. Unseen, unknown, and unheard, she was immediately reported to be hideous in person, odious in character, and stupid and unpleasant in intellect and manner. "What, could any thing good come from

so infamous a person as Mehemed Chifoot?" was said. "The Kislár Aga ought to forfeit his head for contaminating the purity of the imperial harem by bringing into it one so low and debased," was added. "She shall have no peace here," whispered those who were ambitious of royal favour. "We will dispose of her quickly," said those who actually enjoyed favour. In short, the introduction of a new beauty into the harem, seemed to be as difficult an undertaking as enforcing a new doctrine among the Ullemah.

Yeldez, in the mean while, far from enjoying the prospect of returning to her old habitation, although relieved from the fear of facing her former enemy, the late Kislár Aga, was in the utmost trepidation at what might be the result of being conducted before the Sultan in person. Much time had now elapsed since her emersion into the sea. She was supposed to be dead. Could it be possible, she thought, to pass herself off as another woman? She retained her former appellation, 'tis true, but then she reflected that Yeldez was no uncommon name; besides she was better known in

the seraglio as *Shaitan Kadun*, Satan's Lady, than as the Lady Yeldez. Her mind being full of these and such like thoughts during her ride through the streets, of a sudden they were checked by the appearance of the great gate of the seraglio, a sight which put an end to her speculations, being soon after enclosed within its walls. She kept steadily to her veil upon entering the court, where she found a collection of women awaiting her arrival, and would scarcely take it off even when she had reached her own apartment. But during her passage through that court, observations were made upon her appearance which none but women could make.

"Was not there something remarkable in her walk?" said one; "did it not put you in mind of the wicked creature who once lived among us?"

"As Allah is Allah," said another, "yes; it is the monster Yeldez, or rather the Satan's mistress, or my name is not Filfil."

"What say you?" said another. "Are your wits gone? Was not she thrown into the sea?"

She was drowned in a sack. Mashallah! we got rid of her!"

"Well," said the more observant one, "if that be not Yeldez, it is her ghost. She has her very air, her manner of wearing her veil; wait, and we shall see."

Yeldez had reached her apartment, with the feelings of one condemned to death, for under the disguise of her veil, she perceived many a face well known to her, which brought to her recollection all the violent passions that former enmities had produced. She felt certain that all those enmities would again break out the moment she was recognized, and therefore was anxious to remain unnoticed, until presented to the Sultan in person, to whom she was determined to relate her whole history, should he express astonishment at seeing her.

It was not long before the Kislar Aga, paid her a visit, who condescendingly announcing that she was to appear before the Sultan, after undergoing the proper lustrations, recommended her to collect every becoming ornament, in order that she might be dressed in a manner fitted for so im-

portant an occasion. Her ingenuity in screening her face from observation, was put strongly to the test; but she managed, both in her passage to and from the bath, as well as during the operations there, to escape recognition, until, at length, all things being prepared and the hour come, she was taken to where his imperial highness awaited her presence.

So soon as she was within proper distance, she fell on her face, and there, with her forehead to the ground, waited in fear and trembling, until he should say arise. When he had uttered that word, she entirely disclosed her face to him. Struck with astonishment, he exclaimed,

“How is this? Yeldez returned! Have we jins and peris in this land, or are my eyes deceived?—This is the inevitable one!” Then turning to the Kislár Aga, he exclaimed,

“What have you brought me here? O man! know you not that this weak one was expelled from my presence? She committed crimes. Wherefore and how hath she returned? I am surprized! Allah! O Allah!” Then in deep thought, he said,

“She must be inevitable!”

As soon as the Kislar Aga heard these words, he cursed the renegade Jew in his heart, and said “Maledictions be on the dog!”

But Yeldez, who was prepared for this scene, at once acquired full possession of her senses, and adopting an attitude of the greatest humility, whilst she pitched the tone of her voice into a plaintive cadence, she said,

“Let my Lord of Lords, and the disposer of his slave’s life, give ear unto her story, and as it is full of marvel and wonderment, shewing how various and great are the ways of destiny, perhaps he may pause ere he again opposes the decrees of Allah, which though exercised in the fate of one so much a reptile as your slave, are still the ways of Allah.”

“Speak on,” said the Sultan, “and tell me your history from the beginning.”

“As I am your sacrifice,” said Yeldez, “I am a maiden of the mountains of Abchaz; the earliest thing your slave can recollect, is playing about with the children of my village at selling and stealing each other, so early are the natives of the Caucasus taught to hear of slavery, and what we



played at was not long in being realized in my person. My father at an early age disposed of me to the traders on the frontier for a large price, for I was told I should be beautiful, and when with many others like myself, I at length reached Constantinople, having been kept from man's sight till it was time to put on me a permanent veil, I was bought and placed at the feet of my Lord the emperor. It was not till some time after that I became much noticed, and therefore became an object of considerable hatred. It is well known how much the late Kislár Aga hated me, and therefore it is not wonderful that I hated him. I would have drank his blood had I been able. It was said that I attempted to poison him, that I used secret enchantments, that I tried to kill myself in order to spite him, that I made a conspiracy in the harem to make him blind, to destroy him in the Sultan's favour. I did many things, and who would not, to get rid of the tyranny which he exercised over me? but most of the accusations were false. His whole life was passed in attempting to destroy me, and he would often have succeeded had it not been

for the interposition of Allah. I own too that I had a rival in the Kadun Filfil, and that I did my best to endanger her life, but she did the same in furtherance of her jealousy against me. We exerted our best endeavours to poison and murder each other. We hated with our best energies, we prayed to Allah for our mutual perdition, we never saw the sea, but we prayed that drowning might ensue, never crossed a horse but we hoped our respective necks might be broken, and thus we never ceased acting in violent opposition to each other. But as your Majesty knows, her destiny prevailed, since the order was given for my destruction. On that fatal night, when having laid a plan either to stab or poison my rival, according as circumstances might best assist me, and I was laying awake in my chamber scheming the plot, suddenly I was seized by two black eunuchs, who throwing a cloak over my head, effectually checked my cries, and then with much violence, inserted me into a sack. The day was about to dawn, when they loaded me upon the shoulders of a third, and I was hurried through the courts of

the seraglio, to that ominous small door which opens upon the sea, and which we never beheld without a shudder. I can scarcely give an account of my sensations, as I lay in the sack ; but one circumstance which above others aroused all my energies, was the croaking voice of the Kislár Aga encouraging my murderers to exertion, and this being accompanied by an exulting shriek of joy from my rival, brought execrations into my throat which, from excess of agony, were suppressed before they could escape from my lips. I became a living mass of every evil passion, I would have ordered a feast to be made upon every soul within the walls of the seraglio, and witnessed with joy their tortures over slow fires ; I could with savage delight have seen a demon's throat ready to receive them.

“ I gnashed my teeth, I writhed about in my confinement ; I became a Satan myself. But soon were all my miseries at an end, for with a fearful concussion I was thrown into the sea, and there I cast myself about—for the sack was large—and I thus momentarily kept myself above water.

“I was sinking, and should straightway have found the bottom, had not I suddenly felt my progress stopped, and being drawn by force along the surface of the water, I was at length pulled into a boat, where I lay utterly insensible.

“As I am your sacrifice,” said Yeldez, “what was this but the hand of destiny? who ever heard before of a woman being saved under similar circumstances? Had not the boat been there on the spot, I must have been destroyed, and had not a compassionate soul been within, what hope was there for me? Besides, had this act of cruelty not been performed precisely at the hour it was, when the dusk screened the boat from observation, I must have been lost, for who could have ventured to save me in open day? Such then is the history of your slave, in mercy, pity and forgive her. Let her not again incur the displeasure of the asylum of the world, and may he recollect that as Allah has been merciful, so let him not reject her humble supplications, and drive her from the skirt of his robe, which now she seeks.”

The Sultan having listened with patience, until she had ceased speaking, carried his hand to his beard, and stroking it exclaimed,

“Allah! Allah!” then pondering awhile he inquired, “who was the man who saved you?”

“As your slave is less than the least,” said Yeldez, “he is a poor youth, a waterman of the name of Selim, whose mother, a negress, lives at Scutari.”

“What became of you?” said his Majesty, “after you had been saved from the sea, and how did you again return here?”

“May the asylum of the world live for ever,” said Yeldez, “the story is a long one—such marvels has she to relate, that whoever hears them will say the weak one lies; but as Allah is my witness, she speaks the truth, or how else could she ever have got hither, where danger and death awaited her, had she not been impelled by fate?”

“Speak on,” said the Sultan, more than ever interested in her history, “speak on, and lie not.”

Yeldez then continued her story, which is already too well known to be repeated, but suppressing such parts of it, as did not suit her convenience, and dilating upon such incidents as were likely to obtain favour in the eyes of her present master, she succeeded in exciting his surprize and curiosity in a manner quite new to the dull routine of a sovereign's life.

She thought it right to dwell much upon the virtues and excellence of Selim, for she felt that as he might perhaps be forthcoming, she ought, ere now, to lay herself out for securing his good offices. The history of her adventures at Angora, of her travels by the caravan, of her escape at Bagdad, and of her subsequent arrival at the capital of Persia, she described with ingenuity, and so coloured her adventures, as to raise her character in the Sultan's estimation. She concluded her narrative by a lamentation, deploring her ill fate at falling into the hands of one so base as Mehemed Chifoot, for whom, in so doing, she fervently hoped to have secured a suitable bastinado.

The Sultan dismissed her with an injunction to keep quiet, and so to regulate her conduct in the seraglio as to live in peace with her companions ; he then turned upon the Kislár Aga who was in attendance, and poured upon him the vials of his wrath.

“ Dog without a similitude !” he exclaimed, “ wherefore do you go prowling about amidst the filth of humankind, and bring into our presence polluted abominations by way of specimens of undefiled purity ? Must you fish up, from the depths of the sea, what we ourselves have thrown there, and pride your intellect upon having found youth, beauty, and innocence, such as were never before seen, and bring them to our presence, when you have, in fact, discovered what we have discarded as filth and corruption ? Here, blacks, and here, whites,” calling to the executors of his vengeance, “ here, strike this no man, and let him learn what it is to live with his eyes shut, when he ought to keep them day and night open for our service.”

Having received a sufficient number of stripes, the wretched eunuch limped away,

foaming with rage, and without resting on his road, made at once for the dwelling of the renegade Mehamed Chifoot. Accompanied by a band of his myrmidons, he entered therein, and, without a word of explanation, forthwith seized him, and before he could recover from his astonishment, or learn the cause of this intrusion, he was visited by as severe a punishment as ever was inflicted upon a Jew.

“Dog of a Chifoot,” said the Kislar Aga to the afflicted wretch, as he lay writhing on the floor, “you will sell me an old abomination for a piece of spotless innocence, will you? You will not do so another time, by the prophet.”

“Pity, oh pity!” cried the renegade; “as I live, and by your head, I brought her from Ispahan! What evil have I done? Wherefore strike without saying why?”

“You will impose an imp of Satan upon me, when I am looking out for a sainted Houri, will you?” continued the enraged superintendent of the women, urging his men to strike with more violence. “The Emperor is not to have his beard laughed at after this manner! The refuse and sweepings of harems, you pass



off for something new ; but look at these eyes of mine, they are no longer to be deceived. Mashallah ! we are something in the world !”

By this time, the wretched renegade had been beaten into a mass of insensibility, where he was left to die or to recover, as destiny might ordain, and the Kislár Aga, having by this act assuaged his rage, and calmed his temper, walked away sufficiently well pleased.

Yeldez, having retired from the presence of the Sultan, returned to the solitude of her apartment, much disconcerted by the result of her interview. She felt consoled, however, that she had not been slain on the spot, and, moreover, that no order was given for a second immersion into the ocean ; but she well knew the danger of her position, surrounded as she was by her former enemies, and felt that no scheme would be left untried ere they got rid of her a second time. In vain did she determine to command her temper and controul her tongue. She already felt rising within her breast, all the sensations of her former hates, and could not repress the train of thought suggested by the ebullitions of passion. Her

rival, Filfil, was still there. Many of those who had formerly taken part against her, she could perceive from her windows, and although she refrained mixing in their society as long as she was able, still she felt that the meeting must take place, and come attended with taunts, accents of derision, and indications of contempt.

She was sitting alone, ruminating upon her dangerous position, when she was aroused by hearing the voice of the Kislár Aga, who just returned, self-satisfied and triumphant at his victory over the renegade Jew, entered her apartment, and addressed her in the following terms, with the accent of a master,

“Now, open well your eyes, oh, you weak one,” said he; “the Sultan of Sultans has spared your life this once, for it is plain, fate has ordained that you should not die by the hand of man; but beware! Should you open your lips to speak a crooked word, or use your eyes to cast a crooked look, or make one step to the left when you ought to step to the right, you are undone. Your destinies are closed, and you may exclaim, *Allah himayet*,

protection from Allah, for none will you receive from man.

“Has anything befallen Mehemed Chifoot?” inquired Yeldez, with earnest anxiety.

“Make your mind easy,” said the Kislár Aga; “his soul has been made to steal out of his body.”

“Praise the Prophet!” said Yeldez.

“*Ameen!*” said the Kislár Aga, both expressing their unbounded satisfaction at this event, when Yeldez was left to herself, and soon after began to receive the visits of the inmates of the seraglio.

The first lady who appeared was Filfil herself, accompanied by certain of her friends. With an ironical smile, Filfil approached Yeldez, and putting on the appearance of friendship, kissed her cheek and said,

“Your place has long been empty. *Khosh geldin*, you are welcome!”

Yeldez, not unobservant of the smile, and full of sensitiveness as to the nature of her first salutation, returned the compliment in the best manner she was able, and afterwards kept silence.

“Mashallah !” said Filfil; “you are the first among us who has ever made a journey and returned safe. Your steps have been fortunate.”

“Yes, and by sea too,” said a cunning one, inclined for war.

“Yes, and perhaps the Khanum will tell us what lives the fishes lead,” said a third, still more ironical, with a smile of impertinence, that would have made a Mufti angry.

This question produced a universal titter among the gay visitors, whilst it brought the blood into Yeldez’s face, and announced a preparation for hostilities.

“It seems that my absence has as little improved your manners as it has your looks,” said Yeldez. “It is a poor destiny that brings me back to such friends.”

“The sea has wetted the Khanum’s wit, as well as her fair skin,” said Filfil, laughing, and staring at her well in the face.

“The next thing she will do,” said the second, “will be to teach us how the fishes can swim. Mashallah ! what will not travellers say !”

"She must come to us though," said the third, "to learn how to acquire the Sultan's good graces. We know things! Mashallah!" she exclaimed, whilst all the others laughed outright; "we know things, although we have not been to Bagdad!"

"Speak on, speak on!" exclaimed Yeldez, her face assuming a more crimson hue, her eyes beginning to flash, and her breath to heave short. "Speak on; whatever you may know, this I know, that it does not require to travel as far as Bagdad to discover that the Filfil Kadun has not improved in the affections of the heart; and as for those who follow her and lick up the dust of her slippers, they have learnt the arts of speech from the barking of curs in the streets."

"Whatever our affections may be," said Filfil, with a toss of the head, "they are and have been confined to the walls of the seraglio. Had we taken the surface of the world, and the whole of mankind as the ground-work of our affection, as some one we know has done, perhaps we should not have been so exclusive. As for our followers, they have tongues and

wits of their own, with which we have nothing to do ; but this we know, that we will repel insolence, and will not think the better of the Kadun Yeldez because she has been fished up from the bottom of the sea when she ought to have been drowned, nor esteem her the more because she has travelled from one end of Asia to the other, like an unveiled and shameless Yûruk.\*"

By this time, anger had ripened in the breast of Yeldez, and the consequent explosion became inevitable. She swelled in every artery, she clenched her hands, and sat uneasy in her place ; she gave place to those crooked looks, without restraint, which she had been enjoined to eschew ; and, at length, the cauldron of her wrath boiling over, it freely overflowed through the medium of her tongue. Such a torrent of violent words had never before been heard to proceed from one little mouth. Her long travels and various adventures furnished her with new epithets. So various were her allu-

\* So the wandering tribes are called in Turkey—their women go unveiled.

sions, so singular her powers of malediction, so generalizing her modes of application, that no ingenuity of speech could exceed the powers which she exhibited. Filfil and her followers became mute with astonishment, and the whole of the seraglio having collected to hear the rhapsody, it was fully ascertained that the Kadun Yeldez had not lost the privilege of being called the devil's lady, and the dismay was complete.

The Kislak Aga having witnessed the altercation, in vain endeavoured to allay it; as a last resource, he made the case known to his imperial master, and entreated his orders. The Sultan was not taken unprepared, for fully was he aware of the violence of his slaves, and particularly of Yeldez; but, good Mussulman as he was, his mind was so seriously impressed by the story she had related, whereby he felt that the decrees of destiny were opposed to his commands, that he paused ere he ventured to reiterate those commands.

“She must not die by my hand,” thought his highness, “Allah in his wisdom hath determined that; but she must not stay where

she is. If the Kislár Aga cannot maintain his authority without the necessity of drowning, the harem of the empire cannot exist."

He then turned over in his mind how he could best dispose of this extraordinary and inevitable being, and, at length, a thought struck him, which being acted upon, may illustrate how unexpectedly and by what an unforeseen chain of circumstances, the fortunes of individuals are made to depend. The Sultan's attention had been much impelled by Yeldez's narrative, to consider the case and merits of Selim, her deliverer. His first impulse upon hearing of his interference in arresting the punishment which he had ordered, was to determine upon condemning him to undergo the fate of her whom he had saved ; but being a firm predestinarian, he became awed by the reflection that Selim was, in truth, a finger of the hand of providence, and that instead of plotting his destruction, he ought, on the contrary, to compass his exaltation. Having ascertained that he was still at Angora, in the service of the Pacha there, he resolved to raise him to



the first post of importance which should fall vacant, foreseeing that the conduct which he had displayed in minor matters, would secure his integrity in greater.

It so happened that, at this very juncture, the Bostanji Bashi, the comptroller of the gardens, nominally so called, but, in fact, the great police officer of the Bosphorus and its shores, died. The Sultan at once decided in his mind that Selim should succeed him, and accordingly the proper firman having been written, and the pelisse of honour selected, a Capiji Bashi was ordered, forthwith, to proceed to Angora with the commission of investing Selim with the office.

It is now time to turn to that part of our story which relates to Angora, its Pasha, and his harem. Having been relieved from the intrusion of Yeldez, that worthy family had relapsed into its wonted state of repose. The only innovation in their usual habits, produced by that circumstance, was this, that when the name of Yeldez was mentioned, the Pasha would shake his head, stroke his beard, and say :

“*Chok chey ! much ! much !*”

Whilst his wife would exclaim, as she threw her five fingers into the air :

“*Allah bellah versin !* May heaven send her misfortunes !”

Selim was the one principally benefited, for his conduct had been so praiseworthy, and he had so effectually secured the confidence of his master, that he was raised in public estimation, and thereby became, perhaps, the most influential person in the city. Instead of being offensively elated by his good fortune, the modest youth persevered in maintaining the even tenor of his way, obedient and attentive to his superiors, disinterested, though ready to do a good turn to those who, in justice, sought his interference. One favour, alone, he had required at the hands of the Pasha, which was, permission to withdraw his beloved mother from her cottage at Scutari, in order to lodge her in a more becoming house at Angora ; which, having been granted, he felt that his happiness was complete ; his ambition soaring no higher, than to sit in peace, he and his mother, under the shade of the Pasha's protection.

Matters were in this state, when the howlings of the surijies,\* announcing a great cavalcade were heard at a distance, and a tatar† was seen riding on in advance, at the utmost speed of his horse, in order to announce to the Pasha the approaching arrival of his excellency the Capiji Bashi; and to the surprise of all, particularly, to the utter confusion of Selim, asserting that he, Selim, was indebted to him, the *mujdehlook*, or, in other words, the price of good news.

A Capiji Bashi, and a pelisse, he said, were on the road for him; more he would not say.

The astounded youth, and the wonder-stricken Pasha looked at each other in mutual astonishment, not rightly knowing how to meet a piece of intelligence so unexpected; but, in consideration of the commands of the Sultan, they touched their turbans with their hands, and said:

“Upon our heads be it!”

As the messenger had predicted, so did it happen. The great man, the Capiji Bashi, arrived, was lifted off his horse in great state

\* Conductors and guides of travellers.

† A courier.

at the gate of the Pasha's palace, was duly conducted up stairs, seated on the sofa, smoked his pipe, drank his coffee, and then, unfolding the firman from within the folds of a handkerchief, and exhibiting the pelisse from within the folds of a silken enclosure, he forthwith read the one aloud, and taking up the other, threw it over the shoulders of Selim, who, more dead than alive, heard himself called :

“The Great and Imperial Bostanji Bashi!”

“Selim the Bostanji Bashi! how can that be?” exclaimed every one who heard the announcement. “It is but the other day that he was a waterman at Scutari, and a very short time since that he appeared in the shape of a pauper and a slave in this our city of Angora! Well done, destiny! Oh, powerful kismet!” said the pious Mussulmans. “We have seen fate perform great feats, but never such as this. Allah best ordains; but if the slave, Selim, becomes Bostanji Bashi, who knows but the Pasha may become Grand Vizier?”

So soon as it was known that Yeldez, by another stroke of destiny, had returned to the imperial harem, and was once again become a

Sultana, there was no end to the speculations and the surmises of the men, nor to the gossip among the women. The whole city became interested in the event; and though Turks are with difficulty aroused into energy, in this instance they did not fail to do credit to the curiosity inherent in our nature.

Selim, who ought to have been the most elated was the one who spoke the least. He went through all the prescribed forms, on the reception of a firman, and exhibited the proper humility and devotedness upon being invested with the pelisse of honour, but, in his heart, he doubted the truth of his elevation, conceiving it to be a mistake. However, he kept his own counsel until after a conversation with the Sultan's officer, in person, when he became convinced, that in reality, he was the person designated. He then became excessively grave, and asked himself whether he was to consider such an event as downright good fortune, or whether it might not, perhaps, be preparatory to some great calamity.

The Pasha, himself, good Turk, and best of predestinarians, was not in the least disturbed

by envy at this event ; but regarded it as much a matter of course, that a slave and pipe-bearer should become at once a great magistrate, and a superintendant of police, as that the sun was sometimes above and sometimes below the horizon. Philosophy and *kismet* did not enjoy quite so undisturbed a reign in the heart of the Pasha's wife. That excellent lady, who, since the departure of Yeldez, had allowed no occurrence to disturb the phlegmatic composure of her existence, now, however, could not control a murmur, that if promotion was due to any one, it was due to her husband, so long the ruler of Angora, and who, she asserted, was fully entitled to the confidence of his imperial master ; particularly when she recollected, that under the present arrangement, the negress, Rosebud, might claim an equal rank with herself.

Far other feelings existed in the breast of that same negress, for she was, indeed, peculiarly gifted with generosity and kindness of heart, black though she were. When she first heard of the great exaltation of her son, she did not deem such an event extraordinary,

seeing that she esteemed his merits to be quite deserving of such recompense. She was not long in seeking his embrace; at the same time, she brought to his recollection those days when they were glad to gain a scanty subsistence by the toil of his hands, on that very Bosphorus where now he was destined to reign almost supreme. She intreated him never to lose sight of that fact, and whenever he might be tempted to indulge in pride, to go, straight-way, and seat himself on the very stone on which he had reposed, when contemplating the necessity of selling his boat, to fulfil the duties of hospitality.

We must refer to the imagination of the reader, the many circumstances attending the departure of Selim from Angora, to take possession of his important appointment; the expressions of his gratitude, and his leave-taking of his kind master the Pasha; the care which he took of his mother; her humility as well as joy, upon finding herself under the safe-guard of a son so elevated and dignified, and all the various incidents attending his ar-

rival, at a house prepared for his reception on the banks of the Bosphorus, and so take him, at once, to Constantinople.

Having been received with marked attention by the Sultan, and being duly furnished with the necessary instructions relating to the duties of his office, he entered upon them with zeal and alacrity; but, however, much he might feel elated, and almost stupified, by this singular change in his position in life, still he never could divest himself of the idea, that there was still some mystery lurking behind the curtain of his destiny, which, sooner or later, would step forth, and make him feel that there was no human happiness without alloy. And, indeed, so it proved.

The very day after he was installed, and had taken possession of his house; when he, and his mother were in full admiration of his domain, his gardens, his fountains, and had been clapping their hands over the magnificence of the barge, which, in his official situation, was appointed to convey him, he was astonished by the visit of one of the Imperial eunuchs.

Selim visited by an eunuch was a circum-



stance of itself sufficiently startling to alarm him. He had often heard of the disasters which attended their visits, for their business could not fail to be connected with that dangerous commodity, woman, and he still was too much impressed with the recollection of that fatal morning when he had seen two of them throw the wretched Yeldez into the sea, not to be oppressed with fear, now that he heard a visit from one of the name announced. He composed himself into respect as soon as the individual in question appeared, for he feared lest his, Selim's, interference in thwarting the royal decrees by saving one of its victims from a watery grave, should, at length, have been discovered and brought up against him. To his surprize, however, the eunuch made him an obeisance, such only as an inferior makes to his superior, and after a preamble, announced that his Majesty, the Sultan, out of regard to his merits, and from the pure effects of his imperial condescension, had conferred upon him the gift of one female slave, from his own sublime seraglio.

Selim, hitherto unmarried, unappropriated

and indifferent to a change, blushed with apprehension at the gift. He did not, however, forget to make the proper inclination of the body when the name of his sovereign was mentioned, and touching his turban, said,

“Upon my head be it!” whilst he appeared joyful and overflowing with gratitude at this sudden mark of the monarch’s condescension. So soon as the eunuch was gone, he immediately sought his mother, and before she could have time to make him welcome, he exclaimed,

“As you live, mother, have you seen?—have you been informed?”

“What?” said Rosebud; “what has happened?”

“My wit has become small, and my head contracted. Tell me, O mother, is my soul to be happy, or am I to begin eating abomination?”

“Are you become mad, Selim?” said the tender-hearted negress. “My comprehension reaches not to your words. What has happened?—Speak!”

“What has happened!” said Selim; “this

much has happened—I am to possess a slave—a royal slave. Either my fate is becoming more and more desirous of making my head touch the skies, or I am being raised on high in order to sink the deeper. The Sultan has sent me one of his weak ones, from his own harem.”

“Is that all?” said Rosebud, her heart relieved from apprehension. “Are women so much to be feared? ’Tis true all our misfortunes came from a woman, who was thrown into our hands by destiny; but as Allah is great, all women are not Yeldez. Besides, any gift from a royal hand brings good luck; therefore, O my son, let us say, praise be to Allah, and await the consequences with resignation. I will go prepare for her reception. She must be treated as a Sultana; my only fear is, that I, poor ignorant one, shall not know how to behave myself.”

At the close of that same day, the eunuch returned accompanying a lady, closely veiled from head to foot, who was mounted upon a horse finely caparisoned, and waited upon by a black woman slave, also closely veiled. He

caused her to alight, which she did, shewing some appearance of disinclination, for she was not disposed to follow his commands. She was then conducted straight to the women's apartments, to which she ascended with a toss of the head and a disdainful vibration of body—actions which seemed to express, I am doing the owner of this house an honour by my presence.

Rosebud, having watched her progress upwards, fled her presence to seek Selim, who she intended should bear the brunt of the first presentation. Selim too, who was shy by nature, though firm of purpose, was slow in making his approaches, and did not present himself until he had been invited thereto by the eunuch, who, having fulfilled the orders of his royal master, uttered his *mobarek olla*, or fortune attend you, with the utmost obsequiousness, in expectation of the usual present, of which he was not disappointed. Selim then proceeded, followed by his mother. The lady, still veiled, was seated with her back to the door through which they entered. She continued in this position apparently intentionally with dogged obstinacy, whilst the black

slave stood at a distance. At length, as they approached, she suddenly turned upon them, and to their surprize, uttered a shriek, in a voice which they recognized as one not new to them. They contemplated each other for some seconds, when the stranger, throwing off her veil, disclosed the never-to-be forgotten form and features of Yeldez. The exclamations of Allah, Allah! and *ajaiib!* and *akh!* and *chokchey!* and the thousand accents of wonderment and ejaculation consequent upon an unexpected and strange discovery, having gradually evaporated, explanations ensued, which excited the undivided attention of both the parties. Selim did not cease wondering how Yeldez could have got there, whilst Yeldez remained utterly astounded at finding Selim in such a position.

Their mutual explanations did not increase their love for each other. Selim's recollection of her former conduct, made him shudder at the very thought of possessing such a fiend within his doors, whilst she, who, notwithstanding all her former misfortunes, still allowed her brain to be inflated with the vapours that we are

apt to obtain in a court, continued to despise and look down upon Selim, the preserver of her life and the self-devoted to her interests. However, when she began to consider that, perhaps, in truth, it were better to be supreme in the house of the Bostanji Bashi, than the despised and the degraded in the imperial seraglio, she gradually contemplated her position with a more benignant aspect, and concluded by determining that she would do Selim the honour to make him the partaker of her gracious condescension. But to describe the airs of superiority, the accents of command, the insubordination, with which she set about installing herself in his harem, would be difficult; it is sufficient to say, that the house of harmony and repose which she had found, she soon turned into a den of discord and dissension. To the kind and tender-hearted Rosebud, Yeldez behaved like an untamed tigress. She treated her as if her soul was made of mud; she would allow her no rest; she almost denied her being the mother of her own son, and asserted that negresses were only fit to be the foot-stools of white women. Her extra-

vagancies of conduct were unceasing; there was no end to the scenes of contention to which she gave rise, and it required more than the forbearance of Selim, or the devoted humility of Rosebud, to persevere in submitting to her excesses.

The Bostanji Bashi's house was situated in full view of the seraglio point of the imperial palace, and consequently of the very spot where Selim had rescued Yeldez from her watery grave.

"There," said Rosebud, as she one day replied with vivacity to the taunting speeches of the ruthless woman—"there—do you not see that spot? does it not bring to your recollection all that you owe my son, when he saved you from death and the sea? Wherefore then will you continue to tempt Allah, and behave in the ungrateful manner you do?"

"What words are these?" said Yeldez. "Save me from drowning, indeed? There is that for his saving," she said, throwing her fingers into Rosebud's face. "If he had not saved me, would he be here, a greater man than he ever could have dreamt to be?—tell me that—no more of his saving me. I am a

royal woman, and he a vile black and white man, with wool on his head. Am I to endure such a fate? No, he shall never hear the last of his impertinence in presuming to own me as his slave. Slave indeed! I am either his wife, or I am nothing. And if his wife, I am as good as he is. Go to, you black mother of a black and white son. Speak no more, or you will see what Yeldez can do, who has bearded Kings and Sultans to their faces, much less a miserable tigger at the oar, like Selim!"

This is but a feeble specimen of the misery which Selim endured at the hands of this impracticable woman; and, at length, to such a pitch did she carry her insolence, that he seriously considered first whether he might not be the means of fulfilling that destiny to which she had been originally intended, but which he had averted, or secondly, whether he should prefer a petition to his imperial master, the Sultan, setting forth his griefs, and begging that he might be released from the cause of them. He preferred the latter alternative, and consequently having made friends with



the Kialar Aga, he delivered to him a petition, to be presented upon the first fitting opportunity.

Having stated his entire devotion to the commands of his Majesty, and avowing his readiness to lay down his life in his service, if necessary, he said, "If it be the wish of your Majesty that your slave should live the life of the wretched, he is ready so to do, but should it be the imperial pleasure to ordain his well-being, then let him be released from what is worse than death—a vicious woman. Perhaps your Majesty, in the fullness of his benevolence, intended to confer a benefit on his unworthy slave, but be it known that if this be a benefit, death would be more welcome."

More he said, but concluded in language so full of humility and devotedness, that the Sultan, on reading it, could only smile at the simplicity of his Bostanji Bashi, whilst he applauded the success which had attended his own scheme, for, in truth, he had got rid of the one great torment that embittered the well-being of his harem.

“Mashallah!” he would say; “that excellent Bostanji Bashi, what abomination he does devour!”

There was, however, still one plague more in the harem which required expulsion, and that was Filfil, the bitter enemy, and long established rival of the wretch Yeldez. Upon the principle of curing one malady by infusing another, the Sultan proceeded to grant Selim’s petition by a novel mode of concession, but which he conceived would be the means of effectually curing the evil he complained of; he determined to present Filfil to him, as a second donation; it was impossible, he thought, that two wild beasts could exist in one den; the experiment was worth the trial, and although it might be at the cost of his officer’s convenience, yet he was young and could bear it; besides he might thus afford to pay for the great benefit of his sudden elevation.

Selim was impatiently waiting the result of his application, when, to his breathless surprise, the royal eunuch again appeared, and announced that his imperial Majesty, in consideration of his great favour, and approval of

his good conduct, had been pleased to confer upon him the gift of a second slave, and had sent him one of the flowers of the harem, the famous Filfil.

“God is great!” exclaimed Selim; “what is to be done? Allah, Allah! a second slave—a second torment—where can I hide my head? Where can I thrust my ears, not to hear? how can I confine my hands, that I may not strike?”

He then ran and consulted with his mother.

“Has the Sultan sent a second slave!” exclaimed the negress, perfectly breathless with surprize. “There must be something in this; perhaps we are destined to be the jailors of all refractory slaves. Yeldez must have been as violent in the seraglio as she is here—a devil is a devil, be it in paradise or in its own territory; probably this second one may also be a fiend; we shall see. If she be, ’tis plain two such cannot live in one house. Let us put our trust in Allah, and obey our sovereign lord, the Sultan.”

Thus spoke this very sagacious negress; her words were so consolatory to her son, that he immediately received his new gift, accompanied

by all the necessary speeches indicative of his devotion to the imperial commands, and straightway ushered Filfil into the women's apartments.

Followed by his mother, who conducted Filfil, he lead the way to where Yeldez was seated, in all the insolence of despotism. As soon as they appeared, in accents of no encouraging nature, the violent woman loudly inveighed against Selim's insolence, in daring to enter her apartment, and approach her person, without first giving her timely and respectful notice.

"Son of a black woman! thou child of wool!" she said, "wherefore come you thus? Go, go; I abhor and despise everything that belongs to you!"

As soon as she perceived Rosebud in his train, her insolence became still greater.

"Mother of blacks, begone!" she exclaimed.

But what was her astonishment to perceive a third, and what her still greater astonishment to recognize Filfil—Filfil, the one abhorred object of her soul, in that third.

She started up, and standing upon her feet, she exclaimed:

“You here? you, you base and ill-fated wretch! Wherefore do you come? come you to insult me? As I live, you shall not long exist in the same place with me!”

Filfil, adopting the same cool impertinence with which she had accosted her rival in the seraglio, addressed her as follows,

“I am as much mistress here as you are. Mighty fine airs, indeed! One might suppose that there was but one living beast in the world, and that beast was the charming person who now stands before me!”

Who that has ever seen two indignant dogs, with ruffled crests, preparing for a fight; or, perchance, the wild cat, angry at the approach of a stranger, may, perhaps, have some idea of the aspect of these two viragoes, as they eyed each other, excited by mutual taunts and vituperation, to acts of open violence. Having placed them in presence of each other, Selim and his mother retired from the room, and leaving them together, kept watch at some distance, to witness what might be the result of so strange an interview.

It was not long before they heard sounds,

which proved that the actual onset had begun. There was much scuffling, words of malediction, blows, cries, groans, chasing, and tearing about; then a silence followed, with hard breathing, frenzied exclamations, and apparent exhaustion. At this stage of the proceeding, Selim, followed by his mother, ventured to look within the door, where the vigorous Yeldez was seen standing over her antagonist, who, prostrate, with hair dishevelled and eyes closed, had been much belaboured. Yeldez could not speak for rage. She was in truth neither more nor less than the personification of a fury, of a ghou! in frenzy, of an evil spirit beside itself. Every species of malediction and blasphemy was pouring forth, in one unceasing stream, from her livid and foaming lips; whilst death and murder seemed to be flashing from her bloodshot eyes.

Selim, at this sight, could not refrain from interference, and his wary mother scarcely prevented him, for she foresaw that such violence could only end in a crisis beneficial to their future peace. He instantly threw himself upon Yeldez, and exerting his best

strength, dragged her from her victim, and loosing his sash from around his waist, instantly bound her hand and foot, although, in so doing, he felt that he was perhaps contending with something more than flesh and blood, some incarnate evil spirit. Having so pinioned her, he threw her into a corner, and then assisted the fallen Filfil to rise. When she was restored to her senses, he gave them both over to the care of their respective attendants, and then quitted the harem, determined never more to set his foot within its walls until peace should visit it.

He retired, utterly confounded and afflicted at what he had seen, and thoughts and words issued from his mouth, something to the following purpose :

“ And so I have been erected into a man of power, in order that the blood which must flow, sooner or later, from these unfortunate wretches, should be laid at my door. I always thought something more was to proceed from this my singular elevation, than meets the eye. The Sultan, our Emperor, has been frightened by the act of destiny, of which I was the minister, to throw the blood of this miserable woman

upon my shoulders, rather than take it upon his own. So be it. Allah is great ! but Selim will hold fast to that which is good, and pray for strength to pursue the right path."

He, in truth, did not approach the harem, or its inmates, for some time, following the duties of his office with zeal and alacrity ; allowing his mother to superintend his household, and, in her wisdom, to make what arrangements she might deem fitting for its better regulation.

Some weeks had now elapsed, and Selim, hearing nothing of his hopeful ladies, began to flatter himself that quiet and moderation had taken the place of the violence of which he had been the witness, when his mother, one morning, came to him, with a face expressive of great interest and agitation.

"It is as I expected," said she ; "the deed is done !"

"What has happened ?" said Selim.

"Those unfortunate women !" said Rosebud. "One of them, Filfil, is now lying dead in her bed, poisoned ! and the other, that worse than demon, Yeldez, is not to be found. She is



gone — her women suppose that in a fit of madness, she has thrown herself into the sea, or that she has been taken home by some evil spirit, superior to herself in power. But, as Allah is Allah, true it is that both are gone ; and thanks be to the prophet, that you, my son, have had no hand in their death. Now you may reap the fruit of your forbearance, and, for the future, lead a quiet life. Take to yourself a real wife. Seek one of low pretensions, of humble mind, of docile heart ; and, particularly, seek one who loves Allah, and places his commandments ever before her eyes.”

Selim, whatever were his feelings on this occasion, was greatly relieved by this sudden destruction of that which so much impeded his enjoyment of life. He began now to breathe freely. The weight which oppressed him was removed. He became a new man. He was entirely devoted to his duties. He was the pattern of a public servant. He more than ever increased in favour with his lord and master. In time, his mother procured for him

the wife that was suited to his faithful, affectionate, and virtuous character, and he lived as happy as a Turk can be supposed to live.

---

When the Mirza had concluded his narration, I exclaimed :

“*Ajâib* ! oh, wonderful ! Surely, such adventures could only happen in a Mahomedan country ! That universal masquerade in which your women walk, is the cause of much of the cruelty, injustice, and insecurity to which they are exposed. Withdraw their veil, and, at once, they take that place in God’s creation which was intended for them.”

“Allah forbid !” exclaimed my Persian friend. “Who can say what such a proceeding, without due preparation, might produce throughout the country ? Were a royal firman issued suddenly to give freedom to woman’s eyes, that permission would bring on the uncontrolled freedom of their tongues, and then

Allah preserve us ! It is impossible to say what would happen !”

“ Give ear to my words,” said I. “ If you wish Persia to be counted among civilized nations, you must treat your women as responsible beings. At present, they are not so ; for the husband, by shutting up and veiling his wife, takes charge of her actions. Good government is based upon the principle of individual responsibility, which is, indeed, the foundation of true religion. No man can work out another’s salvation. No husband, by putting a veil over his wife’s face, or shutting her up in a separate place, can, by so doing, control the feelings of her heart, or ensure her endeavours to be virtuous.”

My friend, who was ever inclined to adopt the most liberal views relating to government and the liberty of the subject, strange to say, was slow in admitting the necessity of the total emancipation of women from the restraint under which they live in Mahomedan countries. The history of Yeldez, he affirmed, proved, more than ever, the necessity of that

restraint, whilst I maintained the contrary. Although, on a former occasion, he had advocated reform, yet his contrary sentiments now, only proved that the strongest prejudices which a Mahomedan would have to overcome, ere he gave the blessings of liberty to his country, would be those relating to woman-kind.

We parted, as is often the case, little convinced by argument, where prejudice exists. I promised to give him the history of some of our most eminent women, in order to prove to him how worthy they are of being advanced to an almost equality of privileges with man; and he assured me he should be delighted in possessing such facts, were it only to found a story upon them.

I then left him, reiterating my thanks for the benefit he had conferred upon me by his communications, and hoping that he would allow me to continue to enjoy the inventions of his prolific brain.

And here I draw my labours to a close. Whether any further accounts of my visits to my Persian friend will be agreeable to the

public, or whether, according to the custom of the modern stage, I shall be called upon to re-appear, and make my bow, time and my publisher will show. Perhaps, in the meanwhile, I may venture to assert, that the East, as we have known it in *Oriental Tales*, is now fast on the change. "*C'est le commencement de la fin.*" Perhaps we have gleaned the last of the beards, and obtained an expiring glimpse of the heavy caotk, and the ample shalwar, ere they are exchanged for the hat, and the spruce pantaloon.

How wonderful is it—how full of serious contemplation is the fact, that the whole fabric of Mahomedanism should have been assailed, almost suddenly, as well as simultaneously, by events which nothing human could have foreseen. Barbary, Egypt, Syria, the banks of the Euphrates and Tygris, the Red Sea, Constantinople, Asia Minor, Persia and Afghanistan, all, more or less, have felt the influence of European, or Anti-Mahomedan agencies.

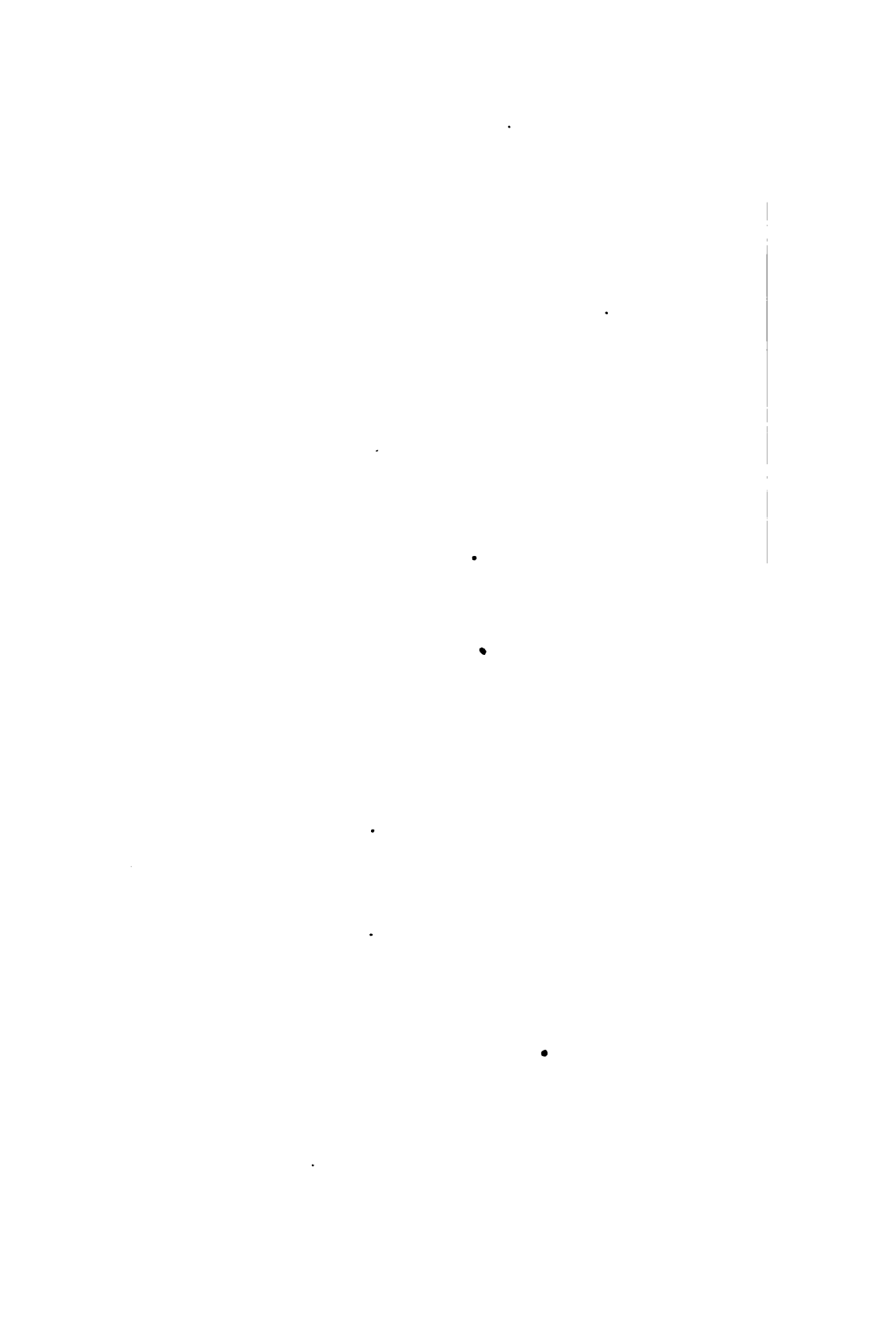
Perhaps the present generations may not see a new structure erected, but, true it is, they have seen its foundation laid. Such like

considerations teach us this great lesson, that in what pertains to kingdoms, states, and nations, as in the case of individual man, nothing is stationary—all is in a state of progression—and thus on till

THE END.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY SCHULEE AND CO., 18, POLAND STREET.









---

.

.

.

.

.

..

.

.

.

.

.

.

-

.

.

